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CHRISTIANITY

AND

MODERN THOUGHT:

TWELVE LECTURES.

BY

WILLIAM HENDERSON

MINISTER OF THE STURT STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BALLARAT

BALLAARAT :

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INDEX.

LECTURE I.	NATURE AND GOD.....	PAGE	1
„	II. REASON AND REVELATION.....	„	17
„	III. MAN AND GOD.	„	33
„	IV. THE GOD-MAN: THEANTHROPOLOGY.	„	48
„	V. SOUL AND SPIRIT.	„	63
„	VI. PROVIDENCE AND PRAYER.....	„	79
„	VII. LIFE AND IMMORTALITY.	„	96
„	VIII. CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER RELIGIONS.....	„	111
„	IX. THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE.	„	126
„	X. THE BIBLE AND HISTORY	„	142
„	XI. SIN AND LAW: HAMARTIOLOGY.	„	157
„	XII. SIN AND ATONEMENT: SLOERIOLOGY.	„	172

ERRATA.

Page	3,	line	7,	for "wizard,"	read wizard's.
"	3,	"	4,	(from bottom,) for "even,"	read ever.
"	11,	"	25,	for "surrounding,"	read <i>surrendering</i> .
"	18,	"	26,	for "neh ushtan,"	read <i>nehushtan</i> .
"	18,	"	39,	for "Bibliolatoes,"	read <i>Bibliolaters</i> .
"	23,	"	41,	for "dissertion,"	read dissection.
"	34,	"	23,	put <i>who</i> , before "has created."	
"	36,	"	5,	(from bottom,) for "conclusions,"	read <i>conclusion</i> .
"	44,	"	11,	comma after, not before, "being."	
"	56,	"	4,	(from bottom,) for "it,"	read <i>they do</i> .
"	60,	"	29,	for "generic,"	read <i>genetic</i> .
"	80,	"	9,	for "war,"	read <i>roar</i> .
"	80,	"	39,	for "our,"	read <i>one</i> .
"	82,	"	24,	for "respectably,"	read <i>respectfully</i> .
"	84,	"	16,	for "is,"	read <i>in</i> .
"	87,	"	28,	for "lightness,"	read <i>brightness</i> .
"	102,	"	34,	leave out "not," after "should."	
"	109,	"	9,	for "jus,"	read <i>just</i> .
"	124,	"	20,	insert <i>of</i> , after "opposite."	
"	140,	"	2,	for "admits,"	read <i>admit</i> .
"	140,	"	38,	for "indicates,"	read <i>indicate</i> .
"	151,	"	35,	for "critics—historical,"	read <i>critico-historical</i> .
"	161,	"	10,	for "one or two,"	read <i>one of two</i> .

PREFACE.

THESE Lectures were delivered to my Congregation during the year 1860. They were meant in some measure to supply a want which I believed to exist among the junior portion, especially, of the community in which I labor. I had few books to consult and little leisure for the work I had undertaken. Such as it is, the result of my work is now here. Sensible as I am of many imperfections and defects about it, I can still pray that the blessing of God may go with it, as I now send it forth into the world.

When these lectures were being delivered the "Essays and Reviews" made their appearance in England. It is surely a very sad sign of the times that a book, like that, in which nothing is first-rate and almost everything is second-hand should have produced a sort of religious earthquake in England. Many of the questions that are treated by the Essayists and Reviewers have occupied my attention here. If I have not made any reference to that book in these lectures, my readers will understand that this arises from the simple fact that the book had not reached this part of the world when the lectures were delivered.

W. H.

BALLAARAT,

Oct. 9, 1861.

LECTURE I.

NATURE AND GOD.

ACTS xiv., 17:—"God left not Himself without witness, in that he did good and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

IN the present course of lectures I mean, to some small extent, to bring Christianity and the results of modern thought, in some of their more salient features, fairly alongside of one another, to see what light and even what shadow they throw on each other. Not an easy task, as I have proved to myself, considering what the two things are; a task not without its difficulties for any one who will honestly attempt it, and one, I am afraid, that is to be but very imperfectly done by me in this place; but one, nevertheless, that needs to be attempted by any one who, seeking to read aright the signs of these times, has some mission to prove himself, even to the smallest extent, to be a spiritual guide to more or fewer of his fellows. In announcing my intention of delivering these lectures to you, I have told you that you are not just to expect a series of sermons on "Modern Infidelity." That plan would have involved a certain pre-judging of the case, somewhat alien to the temper in which I wish to enter upon these discourses. Certainly, the thorough-paced infidel, the man who has abjured all belief in so-called religious matters, who is trying, the best he can, to live without any religious belief, is not the chief object in my horizon just at present. He does not hear me, I suppose, in this place. I have no special desire to go out of my way to seek him. But there is a scepticism of a more earnest sort, which *seeks* rather than *doubts*, to which doubt is rather hateful, if only there were some right means of getting out of it, which has more claims upon our sympathy. The sceptic, using the word in this better sense, the man who cannot quite take things on trust, because other men have said them,—who finds himself encompassed with a world of doubt, the way out of which, by no means, looks so simple as others have found it,—who cannot just pass indifferently by on the other side when difficulties and distressing thoughts appeal to him, who feels himself bound honestly to meet these, to see what truth or want of truth there may be in these, is not one who is to be summarily voted a Samaritan or to be condemned, without benefit

of clergy, as an unbeliever. He is a seeker of the truth, however wide of the mark he may have shot, and is to be dealt with honestly, according to the honesty that is in him; one whom we are to help if there be help in us, and not merely to call hard names at him, or to speak uncharitable words about him. Though there is no doubt considerable exaggeration in what our poet Laureate has said,

"There is more truth in honest doubt;
Believe me, than in half the creeds,"—

yet surely better by far, any day, is honest, earnest doubt—a healthier and a more hopeful thing than a dead, cold orthodoxy, which can maintain its serene composure, and never suffer one particle of doubt to break its rest, just because there is not life enough in its faith to make its faith worth doubting about. I am sure I, for my small share, feel only too glad that modern thinking is of a sort that is apt to reach down to the true foundation of things, that refuses to take anything on hearsay or on authority, that must in all things,—theological as well as other things—learn and know for itself. It is, no doubt, sometimes rather an uneasy element for the human soul to live in. The mind is often tossed and carried to and fro in a very sea of perplexity. Anxious thoughts, stern questions, rise to right and left of us, and leave little peace to the soul. "What is truth? Where is that to be found? Is it possible to arrive at anything like definite, trustworthy results in our search after truth at all? Is the thing that our fathers have handed down to us as the truth a thing also that we may accept and believe with our whole hearts? Or must we now go searching after something better than that?" A heart vexed thus has a right to our warmest sympathy, to the most earnest prayers, even, of which we are capable. We, too, are seekers after truth, are also saying in our own way, "give us that, whatever else you may take from us." If we feel certain, in our own hearts, that the very centre of all truth, round which all the rest moves and must move for ever, has been revealed to us, that is surely the best reason in the world why we should look lovingly, helpfully, upon those who confess themselves to have as yet made no such discovery. If I could be the means of removing any doubt, of throwing light upon any darkness in a brotherly soul, here amid these thick shades of time, I could desire no greater, no more grateful office for myself.

Well: there is danger in this sort of work, of course. Doubts may have to be dealt with, of which some of you, in your quieter lives, have as yet learnt nothing, and they may refuse to be dislodged by what is said to remove them. "There are books," says the authoress of *Aurora Leigh*,—and the same is true of sermons as of books;—

"There are books that prove
God's being so definitely, that man's doubts
Grow self-defined, the other side the line,
Made Atheist by suggestion;—moral books,
Exasperating to license;—genial books,
Discounting from the human dignity;—

And merry books, which set you weeping when
The sun shines;—aye, and melancholy books,
Which make you laugh that any one should weep,
In this disjointed world, for one wrong more."

Things are apt to go thus not unfrequently, by a perverse rule of contraries. And it may be that, in what I have got to say to you, I may prove only able, like the wizard *famulus* of old, to raise a demon which I cannot lay again, to stir questions for which the fitting answers may not just be forthcoming. I must risk all that, however. The doubts to which I may have to refer are none of my raising, but have been wandering round the world for some time past, accomplishing there what it is in them to do. They cannot be over-looked or lightly passed over. As having a commission, as I trust, not from man alone, but from a higher than him, to help others according to my ability, out of darkness into light—having got ordained and set here for that and no meaner end, I have got a work to do in this direction which it will be bad for me if I don't do aright,—still worse for me if I don't do it at all. I don't feel, now or at any time, that I have a right merely to take my stand upon the good character of this religion I profess to preach, a character which it has maintained for 1800 years. I am not going to say, as I might do not without justice, that a manner of belief that has weathered the storms of so many long ages will, more likely than not, be found equal to all the rough weather of this present age. A religion which has whispered peace and comfort to so many of the weary souls of eighteen centuries, which has been a guide in health and a solace in sickness, giving light on the darker places of life, illuminating the very Valley of Death for heavy-burthened souls of men for so long, has surely some claim on men now. But I would make no such appeal, *ad misericordiam*, to those who may doubt its truth, on the mere ground of its proved character. If it is not worth keeping *now*, do not let its eighteen centuries weigh too much with you. We are in a world of our own in this nineteenth century, so they say. Philosophies and sciences unknown to the men of old time have sprung up around us now, and we must find a place for ourselves and our beliefs in the midst of these. It has become necessary for us to enquire afresh, whether the faith which has been handed down to us is good also for our changed circumstances; whether it can stand as an immovable principle of truth and of life amid all the thought and discovery of this earnest age.

What I have more specially to speak about to you, to-night, is the relation between nature and God, between an external world with its phenomena, its forces, its laws, and a Supreme Moral Governor of the world. This is an age in which the knowledge of nature and of natural things is advancing with giant strides, who shall say to what high and even higher results? Wonders, mysteries of science, have been dragged out of the dark for us, and hung up before an admiring world in the open light of day. The knowledge of nature has grown unspeakably: can we say that the knowledge of God has grown in any commensurate

degree along with that? Is it not, in many respects, rather an atheistic century we have got into,—its science and other things, in great measure merely natural, atheistic. We hear of laws of nature, facts and forces of nature, as the supreme, ultimate things we have to hear of, as if nature had driven the Almighty from His throne, and were now reigning Empress of the universe in His stead. But nature, fenced round with her oppressive, inevitable laws, seems hard, heartless, cruel; and we want some Moral Being greater than all natural force: we want to know, not of a supreme law alone, but a Supreme Love—a Love greater than all law, ruling and directing all law. Here as in other things, it cannot but seem better for us that we should be, not under the law but under grace. There is surely an Eternal, Infinite Heart beating somewhere and somehow around all this wide, weltering imbroglio of cosmical force and law: one surely who in mercy is controlling all this, and working out purposes of infinite tenderness and charity by it all. Or have we,—can we have nothing better or more comforting than this cold, inevitable force, in which there is no sympathy for us in any weakness or woe, from which we can look for no deliverance in any distress? Here our sciences, for the most part, grow deaf, and dumb, and dark for us. The soul, vexed and sore through tribulation and pain, finds itself, for aught that science can say to it, in a desert of loneliness and anxiety, tortured by a devil, or a thousand devils, able to discover no remedy or relief for itself. Systems enough there are going, holding together with such principles of coherency as they have been able to snatch from all confusions of thought which lie around: positive philosophies, negative philosophies more than enough:—plans of the universe according to these, trying to set the world and the Maker of it (if there be one) right in the most systematic manner: and amid these the enquiring soul wanders hopeless, groping its uncertain way through such rather doleful regions towards such light as there may be for it. Of a great deal of modern thought and modern science, has not the German Richter told us that it teaches us to look, not up into the Infinite Eye, which is full of light and love, but only down into an infinite eye-socket, where all is darkness and death.

But, before I say any more on the subject, let me turn your attention, for a moment, to the passage I read as the text, as helping to throw some light, not unneeded, upon what is afterwards to be considered. Two strangers had come to a heathen city, preaching the religion of Jesus of Nazareth. One of the signs of their ministry—the healing of a poor cripple, who much needed healing—had filled the people with astonishment, with awe. They could account for what had taken place on one supposition only. The gods were supposed to leave their blest abodes occasionally, to see how things were going on in this world, whether there was anything wrong there that they could put right, and to the darkened minds of these Lycaonians it was quite evident that here was a couple of them. “Eloquent Hermes, sovereign Jove:—if these are not they, we do not, the least in the world, know who else they

can be. Let there be high holiday in Lystra to-day. Quick! out with your fluttering garlands: forth with your sacrificial oxen and all your priestly gear. Such a day has never been for Lycaonia before: such a day may never dawn again. Strike up, psaltery and harp: up, cymbal and drum;—for the gods have come down to heal our cripples for us, and we must haste to give them welcome." To the foreign preachers, to Barnabas and Paul, all this was very sad and disgusting. They had come to declare a kingdom of God to those heathen men, and to be mistaken for Deity itself, was bringing them too terribly into contact with blasphemy to be at all agreeable. They made haste to tell those idolaters: "We are men of like passions with yourselves: our one mission here is to try to turn you away from all your vain idolatries, to serve the One God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that these contain. With all your multitudinous worship, you have been in ignorance of *Him* hitherto. You have been imagining to yourselves a number of feeble, imperfect deities: one god for the earth or the air, another god for the sea, one for the heavens, another for the forests or the hills. You have been walking foolishly in the vanity of your own ways—have been taking, as it were, bits of Deity, and assigning to each its several dominion over the several things in nature that you have seen above, beneath, and around you. But have you not, at the same time, been feeling that there was a testimony everywhere coming to you of the will of a Supreme God, who has created all things, who rules over all? 'God has not left Himself without a witness,' even unto you, and in the very hearts of you has there not been a hidden feeling that that witness was true, that all your idols and idolatries were only vain things, that you have only One God, who has been doing good to you all your days, who has been giving His rain from heaven and His fruitful seasons, and has been filling your hearts with food and gladness?" We know well enough from the evidence that heathenism itself affords us that that witness to which St. Paul referred was, though dimly, still more or less understood by many of the more earnest heathen minds, who could not at all content themselves with the idolatrous superstitions of their fellows, who, amid all the confusions of their rather riotous Pantheon, were still trying darkly to worship one Supreme God over all, Blessed for ever. God had *not* left Himself without a witness, without a thousand witnesses: He had taken care that that witness should not be wholly lost or disregarded;—that, through all the darkness and the superstition, there should still be not a few who were clearly cognisant of the truth of a One God, self-existent, infinite, eternal, who was ordering all things according to his own plan of perfect righteousness. The poor heathen could not help feeling, in the grander moments of his life, that he had a Supreme All-Father over him, who was not without some sort of interest in him, though he, with only his heathenism to guide him, might not just be well able to tell of what sort that interest was. God was doing him good: he could not just tell how great might be the good God was doing him.

And that lesson which the heathen men of Lystra had to be put in mind of 1800 years ago, is one of which we still need to be reminded. "God has not left Himself without a witness:" He is not leaving Himself without a witness now. Nature, if we would listen to her aright, is with her thousand voices, whispering to us intimations of Deity—is busy, under a thousand different forms, revealing God to us. The true reading of all the facts and phenomena of the visible creation,—what they are all declaring to the open, unprejudiced mind, is no other than this: "We are not here of ourselves,—*we*. We have not got tossed together by any lucky chance: we have not by any inherent power arranged ourselves as you see us. We are here as an Infinite Will has commanded us to be; here as an Almighty Mind has appointed us, doing the work the great God has given us to do. You see, everywhere, traces of thought in us, and it was not we that did the thinking—exhibitions of Sovereign Will, and there is no power of volition in us. We act according to a fixed and a just law, and the law is older, stronger than we, and did not grow out of us by any process whatever. Some One ordained it all for us: it is for you to seek after Him." This testimony comes home to us; we cannot help feeling that it is true. Atheism is certainly not the natural tendency of the mind: it is only by a great effort, and constraint put upon all that is best in him, that a man can get into Atheism. People even are fond of questioning whether there is any one, at heart, a conscientious Atheist. I do not know about that. I do not the least know how much, in its extreme darkness, the soul of man will try to make itself believe or not believe. I do not know how entirely naked it may strip itself of all elements of belief. I know that men have preached and are preaching the dreariest sort of Atheism, and have been zealous, even bitter enough, in enforcing that hopeless creed. I have no doubt that the conscience has been subjected to extreme pressure, to the utmost violence, before it has accepted that as the one right thing for it, but the human conscience is so accustomed to violence being done to it, that it is hard to say how much it will bear. There may be men resting quite complacently in this barren, doleful region of *no Godism*. I daresay there are. More especially when we see this actually made part of certain philosophic systems;—when we have a French, M. Comte, for example, with his big books of "Positive Philosophy," very zealously setting himself up as a preacher of Atheism, with a gospel to correspond, reconstructing the world on a plan that does not admit of the interference of any God,—proclaiming that dreary evangel of a "positive religion," which is essentially a purely negative religion, we need not wonder if, under the guidance of him and such questionable bell-wethers, there should be disciples a few, who are trying to measure the world by such a standard, and to make the most of it without having aught to do with Deity in the matter. But what I would have you especially mark is this: you can have no Atheistic theory of the universe without taking certain of the usual attributes of Deity and building them into the system to keep it from falling into

sheer wreck. In fact, we have men speaking of necessity, force, law, even of chance, as directing the whole current of cosmical affairs,—assigning to these the very properties of Deity, infinite power, unchanging wisdom, uncontrollable will. These are the very gods of the Atheist, and when you consider the amount of work he lays upon their shoulders, the amount of capacity that he attributes to them, you find he has been only foolishly trying to strip God and put His clothes upon the naked bodies of these very blind idols. He *has* been making a god for himself, such as he can fancy God to be, and Law or Chance is the name of Him. The world after all does not govern itself; there is some destiny, some law, some fortuity that governs the world. We have the same absoluteness, almightiness, infinity. We only miss the universal Love, the perfect Holiness, the attributes that make God of any use to us. Is it worth while giving up the belief of a personal, living God, only to get instead a blind, heartless, impersonal one?

There is a witness for God in the world. The world itself, through the whole length and breadth of it, if you examine it aright, is a standing witness for him. There is an infinite force in the world, and you can imagine no force that did not start first of all from living thought, from a living thinker. There is infinite wisdom in the world: all the knowledge that men, by one scientific process or another, have been learning from the world, lay, before all your science, contained in the world just the same as now. Who put it there? Who first of all did that wise thinking, which you, after your ages of research, are slowly learning to think over again? Our modern thinkers, so far as their thought is right and true, are only following in the footsteps of an Earlier, an Eternal Thinker; picking up fragments, here and there, of that perfect world of thought which must have existed before any world of real, objective existences. But, in the midst of a world so big with the traces of Deity, the soul of man may sink, nevertheless, into utter, Atheistic darkness and the Shadow of Death—may refuse to believe the testimony that is offered it, and declare the whole to be a mistake and a lie. But this can take place only under the most fearful conditions to the soul. Doubt has taken possession of the soul and has darkened down into utter unbelief. There are no tidings reaching it any more of a higher, better world than this, no intimation any more of aught deeper or more abiding than this narrow *time* that surrounds us. Faith dies out, and hope, in this barren region. There is no help from above; the heavens and the earth have grown dead and soulless to the heart. The grim time-shadows are just all that is hanging over the soul: bare, black negation yawns, a howling abyss, before it. It questions nature, which was once bright with God to it, whether there is any God left for it? and sullen voices come echoing out of the void, "We know not any." There are sons of Adam who are condemning themselves to fellowship with this cheerless, heartless *abyss*, as the only substitute they can find for God. "I have no God, no Father in heaven, to take the least care of me, no One above me in whom I can trust, to whom I can look up in love and hope." No

God! which means no rest amid the pains and distractions of the world, no home for the weary soul tossed about among the vexing time-storms—no healing for the soul's wounds or diseases, racked by all the confusions and disorders here. The spirit has lost anchor and anchorage, and drifts helpless over dark, tempestuous seas, who can tell whither? Sad to see any one driven to that with all the capacities for belief that are in him. Yet, I fear, it is not uncommon. The cold and blighting death-shadow of Atheism is nearer us all than any of us may be thinking.

But what witness have we for God in the creation amid which we live? We, fearfully and wonderfully made, live in a world as fearfully and wonderfully made as ourselves. We look around on the marvels of nature, rising thicker and ever more marvellous upon us as we gaze. How did these things come there? and how came we, with these thinking, enquiring souls among the rest? There is a plan pervading the whole,—all is working out some grand purpose,—and we cannot help asking whose purpose it is. Things are not thrown together in any confusion. One thing does not interfere with another, but all work together towards high and ever higher ends. Everything is contrived with skill and wisdom. "Day unto day uttereth speech: night unto night showeth knowledge." Everything we see or hear opens up some mystery of wisdom and of a Divine purpose:—the very eye and ear by which we know those other things are not less wise or wonderful than the rest. Who made things thus? Who made the eye so skilful to see, and the world so fair and wondrous to look upon? Who made the ear to hear, and provided a world of strange sounds and voices for its use? Who clad yonder sun, with its envelope of glory, to shine upon inferior worlds? Who clad the earth with its glad covering of green, to provide food for beast or man? Who hollowed out a place for the ocean depths, or gave the key-note to ocean's everlasting psalm? From out its "sea of pines" the hoary mount looks heavenward, his head high up in the cold blue air above earth's storms and thunder;—who was it sent its snow clad pinnacles so far into the solemn sky, or sent its rains forth to gladden and fertilize the lower earth? Or who was it made ourselves, so strangely, so fearfully; gave us those powers of thought, of reason and of will, the seeing eye, the understanding heart, the memory that makes the past our own again, the hope that paints so brightly for us the future's solemn face? Who? Everything leads us out of itself to front this mysterious question. For, "*we are verily of yesterday, and know nothing.*" Nothing as we need to know. Everything leads us a little way backwards: the phenomenon, the thing we see, tells us of some force that made it so: the force whispers to us of a law according to which it must work, and there we are left standing in the midst of mystery and the dark. There is no light for us further—no light save that from the Eternal Throne, the light of the countenance of God. Everything, however mean or poor, leads us in towards that centre of all force, of all law, that source of all life. I raise my hand: I move my foot. How did I do it?

Some muscles gave rise to the movement, science, which can even tell the Latin names of these, announces to me. But what moved them? How were they able to do it? There was, of course, a force resident in myself, a force of will, from which their action proceeded. But what gave the will any such power? Where is the link of connection between the invisible thought of the mind and that consequence exhibited in the outer man? I cannot tell: no man, no science can tell me. I open my eyes and in, as through an open window, a world of beautiful images come trooping upon the soul. Whence did they come, or how? How did they paint themselves on the eye? How did the eye transmit them into the soul? I do not know. I can trace the process; I cannot the least explain the power. Some One has made the thing to be so, but He has kept the secret of its working to Himself. The force that I see around me, or feel within me, which is so inexplicable, must be somehow—I cannot tell how—connected with His own universal life. Human science can discover to me a great deal about causes and laws and what not, can tell me of gravitation, of electric force, of nervous and cerebral capabilities, just as if the naming of these things was to solve all the mystery of creation to me. It only makes the mystery greater. When I have learned all that science has to tell me, I am, so far as understanding of the powers and causes of things is concerned, just as wise as I was. My knowledge has increased to a considerable extent, but, unfortunately my ignorance has gone on, *pari passu*, side by side with my knowledge; and every new thing known involves also another and a greater thing that is unknown. Mystery everywhere and always: no escape from mystery—and behind all that what is there but God? In that one name lies, we feel sure, the whole secret of the universe. For, as we look on nature with all her fair forms, as we listen to all her sweet sounds, and have the whole summer of nature shining and singing in our souls, the higher thought ever forces itself in on us—the highest thought of all; it is in God that we live, not in nature; for she too is dead and not alive, but for the breath of God breathing through her: it is in God we move, for both life and motion are alike from Him: it is in Him, not in nature, that we have our being; for our being, such as it is, is more than natural, something more than what has just been born. We have a God who is near to us always, revealing himself in all that He has thought and done, in all the works of His hands, in the heavens, the earth, the sea. Truly said the Psalmist, “The heavens declare the glory of God: the firmament sheweth forth His handiwork!”

“Nothing of the sort,” says the Atheistic philosopher to us. “It is not so. It is a delusion, a very *anile* fable, all this. We have examined the matter for ourselves, and found ‘no God’ written very visibly on the face of nature.” M. Comte, for example, with his proud positive philosophy, with which, let us hope, wisdom is not to die;—M. Comte, who is entitled to the place of chief Atheistic thinker of these times, puts in his very confident demurrer to all belief in any Deity higher than the human spirit itself. It was quite a fitting, rather a pretty

sort of belief, so long as the world was in its childhood,—this of God's having made all things, of His ruling over all things. But now, especially since M. Comte, I suppose, has come into it, the world has reached its full manhood, and can do without its silly child's beliefs. "The heavens," for example, "are telling us the glory of God," so you say. Not at all. At the very utmost, they are telling us the glory of Newton, or of Herschell, of Copernicus, and of Kepler, the men who first unveiled their scientific glories to us. These men it is who have created the heavens for us, made them become what they now are to us. There was no order or law in the heavenly bodies till these men showed it to us. Well: as it happens that the order of the heavenly bodies was just the same before there was any discovery, of the scientific or any other sort made about them;—as Newton and the rest owed all they found out to the heavenly bodies, while they again owe nothing at all to their interpreters, we can only wish for them some better work to do than the one M. Comte has assigned to them. It may show their good sense, so far, to be declaring the glory of Herschell and Copernicus, but it is surely an evidence also of their humility, that they should have tuned their sphere music to the praise of some poor mortal who was just able to find out a little about them, which had been for thousands of ages unknown. But is it not wonderful to find that this is the sort of thing we are getting, now a-days, in room of the old belief in God? Surely the order of the heavens had been thought out all long before Newton and the rest of them were able to think it over again, or else it would never have been there. It was not the first time by many, that a ripe apple had fallen from a tree, and just by the same law, ere Newton built his famous gravitation law, if he did build it, on that simple phenomenon. The planets did not at all cease to be disorderly and learn to obey the law of planetary motion which Kepler discovered to us, just in the hour in which that discovery burst upon his mind. Would it not be well that philosophy and science should still seek to retain a little humility, in the presence of all the wonders of creation,—should confess, as Newton confessed, how little, after all, it is that they know, and should ask whether there is not still some wisdom in the words that that old king of Israel sang so many ages ago, "What is man,"—even scientific man,—"that Thou, O God, art mindful of him? what is the son of man, that Thou shouldst visit him?"

Child's belief, is it, this faith in a living God; and now we are grown men and women in the nineteenth century, and cannot get into our child's clothes any more? Must try to shift for ourselves now, without any such imaginary supernatural help, amid all the pains and perplexities of a changeful and trying world? Must try in fact, to be gods to ourselves now, for that, very literally, is the actual net-result of a great deal of our modern thinking. Well, it is surely just the prodigal's spirit in a new form. "Quick! the portion of goods that falleth to me, and then out into the wide, free world, even though it may have nothing better than riotous living, and then the society of swine for us, with

that prodigal's portion. No narrow father's house for me; do not you see I am full grown now? It is a question whether, in any such sense, I have a Father." And so the spirit gets out into the world it longed for, and finds it not quite a fool's paradise after all;—gets its share of questionable living and of swine's husks, and does not get fat either on the one diet or the other. The world turns out to be earnest enough, and if there is no father's love in it more there are terrible judgments of God, no less, that are not so easily gainsayed or escaped from. In such circumstances God is apt to prove stronger than man. If in any one, thus led, there be any better mind still left, the child's belief may yet prove itself to be the best. The child's heart may come back to him, and the Father's name into which he was baptised once, may still shew itself to be a name of power; a symbol of an Almighty heart that is full of love to him; of a home that has not grown cold for him yet. But surely to be utterly without God in one's belief is no better than the prodigal's husks, or as a very feast of shells, from which all food and nourishment have been abstracted long ago. It is surely like trying to dine on the east wind, to seek for any sort of spiritual aliment in that atheistic quarter.

This however, you may say, is not just argument, and indeed I am not sure that it is argument so much that is needed here; for after all, the reasoning on the other, the atheistic side, amounts to no more than a presumption that there may be no God, and as we are still, luckily, in possession of the field, we may surely ere surrounding our faith in God, demand something better than a bare presumption; a possibility that we may be wrong. But let us see what atheism, in face of all the facts of nature, has got to say for itself; what it can adduce by way of weakening the testimony of all the witnesses which have been so often called on the side of God. We have seen how, when we behold in the world so many marks of design, we are fairly entitled to believe in a designer;—when we see such wondrous manifestations of thought, we cannot fancy ourselves wrong in putting our faith in an Almighty Thinker. It is what we do every day in reference to meaner things. Wherever we see marks of skill we know at once that there has been a skilled workman before the work came there. If you see anything constructed to serve a purpose, whether you can understand all about it or no, you conclude somebody has made it so. It was neither chance nor law, but a scheming brain and a pair, or many pairs, of active hands that brought the thing into being. It may be a watch, a book, a picture, a musical instrument, or a steam engine: you know that it did not come there of itself; that mind—living, thinking soul went before it in the order of existence, and caused it to be so and not otherwise. Can we be wrong in applying the same principle to what we see in nature? If mind devised the telescope, what was it that planned the eye? If it was a living being that devised the watch, was it not a living being too, was it less than a living being that produced the sun, or the flower that expands in his light? But then we are told, or at least were told in the days of Hume and his school, that the world is a single thing

by itself, a singular effect, as if that could make any difference. We can understand how the watch was made; can observe and trace each step in its production, and can fairly eliminate every element of wonder out of it. We cannot do that with the world. We have no experience in world making; never saw nor are likely to see a world made, and therefore cannot tell whether there be a maker of it or no. The common sense of men would be apt to say that the only proper inference to be drawn from any argument on the ground of singularity of effect in the world would be the singularity of cause as well. The world is not just like other effects, and therefore the supreme cause of the world must be not quite like other causes. The world has heard quite enough of Hume's argument, so-called, though it has fallen pretty silent now-a-days. Mere singularity of effect does not materially affect the question, nor make it at all improbable that the rule that has been found constant in commoner regions will hold good also for this singular one, and that here also it was a designer that preceded design.

But the Atheistic thinking of this age has got a few steps in advance of Hume and any of Hume's arguments, and settles the matter for us on quite other grounds. It has got an answer of quite a different sort for us. "All this about final causes, design, and what not,—it tells us, is only so much foolish talk, unprofitable, silly and vain. The world is not at all conducted in this pitiful way of adjustment of final causes, and effects that are not final. It was only the mind of man, in earlier days, trying to perceive that the ends of things were the best for himself—something to contribute to his pleasure and happiness, that was pleased to indulge in such fond imaginations. Nature goes on her own way, very careless of consequences, working according to her own order, following for ever with inevitable precision her own laws, and takes no concern about final causes or ends of any kind that are to be served by her manner of working. If the representation of God working *according to His own will* be a correct one, then everything must be the product of some special volition of His,—a single act of will going before every single event that takes place in the world. A personal Will, with its infinite number of volitions, is a supposition quite inconsistent with what we actually see in the world, where everything goes by fixed inflexible law. Personal will and universal law are suppositions that mutually exclude one another, so that the one cannot be true if the other is; and as we are quite sure about the law, the notion of an Infinite Will, of course, falls to the ground. We see in nature no departure from determined order; everything whatever goes on by unalterable laws, and no infinite series of volitions at all." Now, on the supposition of a God of Infinite righteousness, you would at once conclude that His volitions, His acts of will, *could* only be done according to an Infinite order, that it would not be without law, but by law that He would work out His purposes. You would imagine, too, even though you might run the risk of being thought old-fashioned in your ideas, that if there are laws, of nature or of aught else, there must be a Lawgiver. We have not found out yet that law has any faculty for

enacting itself. If God does rule by His own will, His will must either be Infinite order, or Infinite breach of order, and with a Being of unlimited wisdom and truth, you can imagine for yourselves which it is most likely to be. The laws of the universe present themselves to the mind of the believer in God simply as the expressions of an Infinite Will, which must in all things be right and not wrong, which must also have a purpose as well as a plan, an object as well as a law. So that, so far from the fact that there are fixed laws of nature being a contradiction of the doctrine of final causes, the one of these two things cannot be true without involving also the other. The order of nature ought only to shew us that there is a God over nature, whom we can trust, who is not capricious or arbitrary in His mode of governing the world, whose counsels do not change at all. He has appointed laws that He keeps: we can trust Him in the execution of those laws: we could not trust Him on any other supposition. His volitions do not interfere with the order of things, just because He is true and cannot deny *Himself*. All that we need to know is that His order is consistent with the expression of a Father's love, that it *is* the expression of such a love, that He can feel for and help us, and yet break no order or law at all. We can, then, confide in Him, just because we know that His plans—His laws cannot change or be changed for ever. The highest law of all, in which all the rest centre and rest, is the law of Infinite Mercy. Other merely natural laws may terrify us in their operations: our confidence in this Supreme Law of love gives us peace and infinite joy. He is thinking kind and gracious thoughts of us, and we can trust Him all the more just because He is a God of order and cannot change. He is Love, and all law, natural or other, is simply a manifestation of that sublime truth.

The thoughts which we have mentioned belong, perhaps, more to the philosophers. There are other and darker ones apt to trouble the souls of tried and toiling men. The general order of things may on the whole be taken to be wise and good. Natural laws are working, to some good end, may be. But there are other and more terrible things in nature too. There is misery, sorrow, death:—there are events that are *only* fitted to bring pain and grief, happening day by day. Sighing and tears, groans and unspeakable sadness of heart:—can we imagine that there was a God, a Being who must be of infinite kindness, who also designed these things. Could *He* have contrived His universe so that these, in so many cases, should be the inevitable result? If you take the good results in the world, and argue for a God of goodness from them, what shall we say of those which are evil? You may, no doubt, try to make the most of it you can. The storm, for example, clears the air and washes the impurity and unhealth out of it; but if it has sent a thousand souls to a watery grave, and destroyed many of the works of men, and brought prosperous families to beggary, what are we to conclude of Him who has ordained it, if we are actually shut up to belief in such a One? The roar of the thunder, the flash of the lightning, may be a marvellous display enough of Divine power, if we are bound

to take them as such, and may serve a not ignoble purpose amid other cosmical forces;—but it may be, ere that heavily-charged thunder-cloud has emptied itself of all its electric contents, a few bodies of living men, who went peaceably about their work, or sat at rest in their own homes, have fairly had the souls burnt out of them by the destroying fluid. Or again: that affection which draws man and woman together, which in its purity makes the twain to become one in flesh and in heart, may be taken as a fair instance of creative adaptation: but do we not see it producing a very devil's harvest of crime and impurity and wretchedness around us daily? Is it not better to take refuge in utter atheism than continue believing in a God who must be responsible for the evil as well as for the good, for the sorrow as well the happiness of His creatures? He has made the world so as to be fruitful in such a crop of sin and sorrow: how can we believe in a God of infinite goodness in face of all the darker, sterner facts of nature and the world? Well: it is, of course, easy enough setting ourselves to judge the works of God, thinking ourselves able, like the blasphemous old king of Castile, to have given Him a few hints about the way of making a world which He might have been the better for knowing. There are plenty, like king Alphonso, who rather delight in finding God in the wrong, for the purpose, I suppose, of getting quit of the obligation to believe in a God at all;—in concluding, that if there had been such a God as they are called upon to believe, He must have made things here otherwise. He must have made things better. Now we have seen, already, that God, in His works, has a certain order which He cannot break through, which it would be wrong in Him, just as it is wrong in us, to try to break. All would go to confusion and wreck if that order were to be suspended whenever it was like to produce evil consequences. It is a hard thing that a man who has a wife and children depending for bread on him should fall from the top of a wall or down a shaft, and get the life smashed out of him; but are you to vote the gravitation law a mistake, and Him who appointed it, a bungler for that? The law of gravitation remains right, and the man who breaks it, even innocently, must suffer for it. But here, no doubt, nature is an imperfect teacher. We need something higher and better. We need to know Him who has sanctified sorrow, and who has sweetened death, who has brought life and immortality to light. Nature grows dumb and dark for us, often when we most need light and good news. The ills and confusions of nature, of life, of the world, are only to be looked upon in hope and blessedness from beneath the cross of Jesus Christ.

But it is not only in the atheistic direction—it is still more in the Pantheistic direction that a great deal of modern thought is tending. Pantheism, the sort of gospel which is preached to poor souls, under that or kindred names, is accepted by many as a true and perfect solution of all the riddles of nature and life. "We will grant God to you; will allow you at least to use that name for want of a better, only taking His personality and all things that depend upon that from Him. Nature herself, with her vital forces, with her wise laws, is God, and

there can be no other. The idea of an *Infinite Person* is a contradiction in terms. The very essence of personality consists in its being bounded, finite, marked off from all other personalities or existences. Two personalities cannot exist together: the one necessarily excludes the other. If one exists *there* the other does not exist *there*, but some *other where*. And if we imagine an infinite personality, that necessarily excludes all others. I am a person, every other person must exist outside of me—cannot occupy the same space with me. If I ascribe personality to God therefore, He too must be outside of me, and cannot occupy the same space, and so far, therefore, He is not infinite, but finite; excluded, at least, from that space which my personality occupies: and so on, a deal more, with high philosophical phraseology of divine immanence, divine transcendence, and I know not what. Not a personal god, therefore, is this Pantheistic conclusion, only a god immanent in Nature, with no personal being or attributes at all, with no moral character—a mere aggregate of natural laws and forces. It is not so very much more, after all, than just what the atheist can allow us; but it sounds prettily enough with its constant use of the holiest names, as Emerson, and others such, deliver it to us. There lacks not charm for the young, enquiring mind, in the sort of haze, threaded with golden light in which, mainly, this doctrine delights to invest itself. But is there any reality for us here? any truth on which the soul can rest in its storms and darkness? Have we, we ask, a personal God to go to, who can hear our prayer and alleviate our sorrow and forgive our sins? Or only such a poor, metaphysical immanent god as this existing in the world and bounded by the world; infinite and eternal only so far as it also is, with no righteousness or love in Him; no goodness or truth; no merciful thoughts about us, nor power nor will to help us in our conflict with the narrow oppressive time-spirit, which so confounds and perplexes us here? In this sense, also, it is true, "he that loveth the world," he that has made a god out of that, "the love of the Father [the personal, merciful God,] is not in him." Personality not in God! Not without a contradiction in terms to be attributed to Him! On the contrary, He, as the true, absolute personality, must embrace within himself, at once the universal idea and the special realization of personality. Divine personality, as being infinite, not finite, must not exclude other personalities, but must include them. That is just an essential requisite of the idea of divine personality. In one respect, therefore, the pantheist may be able to set us right, if we need being set right. It is an *immanent*, an indwelling God, as well as a transcendent, outside one, whom we have to worship. "One in whom we live, and move, and have our being," as well as the infinite deity, inhabiting all eternities and their praises. Immanent—dwelling in that which He has made, and yet transcendent too, having His life and being outside and independent of us; exalted infinitely above us and Nature. He is our Father, and as first of all the personality of the child is involved in that of the parent, so that you cannot tell when it begins to be a separate and independent thing, so His paternal personality, being an eternal thing and incapable of change, embraces and

includes our personalities always. It is *not* a figure of speech that we live, and move and have our being in Him.

In this age, with its wild uneasy fermenting-vat of sciences and philosophies—with its Compté's philosophies, Hegel's philosophies, its "essences of christianity" distilled into pure pantheism or atheism, it has grown not quite so easy to see and rejoice in the truth of a living God, a Heavenly Father. The firmament has got darkened for us. It is only the humble, child-like heart, that wins its way out of the darkness. Such an one takes God with him into his thoughts of Nature; leans upon His hand; speaks trustfully to His heart: and when the din and war of contending schools—the shriek of hoarse speculations, each solving the mystery of the universe in its own way, and shouting out "thou fool," to every one that will not say Shibboleth as *it* says Shibboleth, rises around him; when even the spiritual guides set to teach man the way to the Father, may be untrue to their trust, and may be contending about the breadth or narrowness of the way, or the sort of shoes you are to wear on it, or Heaven only knows what, he walks the earth with God in his company, with God in his heart, and as he goes, things grow brighter for him; troublesome shadows, frowning like very walls of impenetrable dark, grow clear with Heaven's own light, the light of a Father's face. For he has got above them; up to the mountain top—"the table-land to which our God Himself is moon and sun," and can look down into the wintry glooms of doubt and unbelief, and sees the eternal glory of God above them; sees what of truth there may be in them, what, also, of a devil's lie there may be in them, and meekly accepts the truth, thankful that it has come from any quarter to him, while he leaves the lie to travel on, as it is doomed to do, into its native darkness again.

Well, my friends! I must have done for this time, and have only again to declare to you, in conclusion, God's own good news, that you have a Father in Heaven, who cares for you all, who is seeking after you and your good evermore. You may see traces of His glory, hear echoes of His voice in nature, and nature would be dark to you if you did not know Him in it. But, above all, you learn to know Him when you go for light to that cross whereon His Son Eternal hung for our offences. *There*, you need no more to grope in the dark after Him, if haply you may find Him. *There*, in that "sanctuary of sorrow," He has made our suffering and feeble nature one Eternally with His own. The gloom of temporal things has there got cleared away, and in the bright Easter light that has risen for the soul of humanity above the Holy Grave, we look upon God and know Him gracious, look upon ourselves and know that we are forgiven and put right again—look upon life and upon nature with their distresses and disorders, their marvels and their mysteries, their perplexities and woes, and all becomes big with Eternal peace to us. Not happiness alone, which we can do without, but blessedness that is for evermore, and assurance of victory whatever our fight may be, and freedom rejoicing in the Truth, become ours. For are we not children of God? "And if children, then heirs—heirs of God, joint heirs together with Christ."—AMEN.

LECTURE II.

REASON AND REVELATION.

1 CORINTHIANS I. 21 :—"After that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe."—(Cr. c. II. 9, 10.)

IF there is a God, it becomes a question how we are to know Him. What is He, or what is He like, or with what thoughts are we to think of Him,—what conceptions are we to entertain of His nature, of His character? Questions like these are of the highest moment to us, and down at the bottom of our hearts are getting themselves asked continually and making us feel uneasy, if we do not just take and choke the life out of them by some evil process or another. God! I am not here of myself, then,—was not cast up as a waif from any stormy sea upon this barren strand of time,—was not dropped by any blind chance out of some passing cloud on the surface of this strange and wonderful world. It was not chance *at all* that had the fashioning of me, and it was not *only* law; but the Will of some great, Infinite Being, Incomprehensible, Absolute, whom I know and can know so imperfectly, of whom all my best thoughts are but dim and vague :—it was by that that I was designed and formed, fitted with all manner of strange furnishings, with powers and capacities the meaning and end of which I am only gradually coming to understand; and appointed to the place I occupy here. I have come into the world, I with so many millions more, whence I know not—how or for what purpose I can but darkly guess: but there was some higher will than mine, or any other's known to me here, that sent me hither, that is working its pleasure with me here, that will take me hence—whither, I cannot tell, when I have got through life's short day and done with life's brief work. And He who thus holds me in His hand, who leads me on through brighter days of sunshine and darker days of storm, whose laws direct the current of my history and control the powers of my life and all the onflowings of my destiny, who gradually unseals and opens up the solemn gloom of the future for me, and shuts off the flown, irrevocable days of the past, who has thus beset me behind and before—ay, me, how am I to conceive of Him, of His nature, of His purpose with *me*? Above me the bright heavens are telling me of Him; around me the softness of summer winds, or the voice of winter's blast, the murmur of the green brook, or the hoarse music of the sea, is witnessing about Him; and everywhere, from verdant dale or

sunny hill, from shaggy forest or rippling cornfield—everywhere I see or hear something that tells me of God, that teaches me to feel that I too have to do with Him. But my best thoughts are still very dim about Him—unsatisfactory and uncertain. I am not sure that they are right. They change like the summer breeze or the morning cloud, but He does not, cannot change with them. They are often full of doubt and darkness, and with Him, I am sure, all must be bright, Eternal Truth. They often afford me only perplexity and distress, and He must be above all that is perplexing or painful. Have I nothing better than my own thoughts to tell me about Him?

My object to-night is to shew you that we need something better than our own thoughts and feelings here, that we need a revelation from God Himself of what He is, of what His will about us is. There are things that nature cannot shew us, that our own reason cannot discover, that God Himself must tell us if we are to know them. We need a revelation—an authoritative declaration of God and of God's mind—something that will not be good merely for one man or for another, but for all men, everywhere. And the Bible is that revelation—that or nothing in the wide world now known to us. Amid the confusions and distractions of this uneasy time, its opposing systems of thought, each founded on reason, and yet each contradicting the other, I want to shew you that it is still possible for us to believe that—that it is not right or safe to believe aught else than that. With this great, modern institution of thinking, taking up, in not a few quarters, rather a hostile attitude in reference to the Divine character of the Bible—infidels, and what not, in Germany, England, and elsewhere, shouting *neh ushtan* against our Divine Book, any believing man is forced to look well to the foundations of his faith in revelation, to see if he has not been building on quite a wrong and unsafe foundation—to see whether this book is actually a revelation from God, or something quite different from that. Now, there is one thing I want to take slight notice of here, in reference to the respect, the honor that so-called orthodox Christians are represented as giving to the Bible, as an authoritative, inspired declaration of God's will to us. To many minds there is no better way of prejudicing them against any sort of truth or belief than by affixing a term of reproach to it, branding it with a clever nick-name. "Give a dog a bad name, and then," you know what further fatal proceedings the proverb allows you to institute against the ill-named animal. This kind of tactics has been followed in the present case only too well. We are to be dubbed Bibliolatoes because we still have a very earnest faith in the truth of the Bible. That is the right name for us, they say; and then, as Bibliolatry rhymes with idolatry, and is understood to mean something of the same sort, any quantity of superstition, bigotry, and what not, may be charged against us in consequence. "You are making a God of a printed book, of so many printer's types put together in a certain curious way. That is the one Infallible thing, the one object of worship for you. Men worshipped wood and stone long ago or may be doing so still in certain dark places of the earth, because Deity is held in some way to reside in the dead block :—are paper and printers' ink so

very much better than wood or stone?" Well, this sort of reproach has not the merit of being very original at all events. It is some twelve centuries since Mohammed called Christians by the Arabic equivalent to this name, and now that it comes to us in a more Greek form, we are not going to be any the more afraid of it for that. Bibliolaters! Perhaps there are some people, somewhere, who ascribe Divine honors to the *book*, who say their prayers or sing their hymns to it, and if there are, we have no objections to hand them over to the tender mercies of the infidel or the rationalist. And there may be—I have no doubt there are—people orthodox enough, in the church, who hold by the mere letter of the Word which killeth, thinking *they* are not the least to be killed by it, but that they are to be saved by it, while they leave the spirit in whom alone is life, alone in good rest—not at all troubling themselves about the spirit. If these can be in anywise amended and brought to a better mind by the use of a hard name, you may try it on with them if you like. If their religion be only a lie, a thing of cold, dead orthodoxy, a piece of "hollow, insincere cant," not a thing of the heart and soul, but a thing only of the lips, or, perhaps, only of the belly, surely it is nothing less than right that they should be called by some name corresponding to their nature. But as we are professing to be something else than worshippers of the letter, to be worshippers only of the God who has made us, and who has taken such care of us since he has brought us here, who has for one thing, as we believe, spoken to us things that we could not have found out without Him, things that are contained, for want of any better medium, in a printed book, which does not change as one's thoughts change—we would rather not be called by any such designation. We do not worship the Bible, though we believe that God has spoken to us by that means, any more than we worship the works of nature because we believe that God has also spoken to us, though in a dimmer way, by them. This book is one of the works of God, as the light is, as are the stars of heaven, as is the blooming clover, the wind-tossed oak, the falling shower. It only tells me more of God and of those high Eternal things which I am seeking to know than any of these things can tell me, and is, therefore, so much the dearer to me than these. When I get a letter from some one very dear to me, from a father or a friend, I do not give the same honor or affection to the piece of senseless paper, as I do to the writer himself. But that letter is more precious to me, from the spirit that breathes and lives in it, from the loving heart that it reveals, than any commoner communication could be. It takes me, for a season, out of myself, out of my present narrow surroundings, and old scenes start up on me—the old river is murmuring beside me, and remembered winds are whispering in the old trees, and feelings of friendship or of love grow warmer, as I read the far travelled page. Such power have paper and ink over the soul. I do not specially love that paper or that ink more than others of the same kind—I am, in fact, quite indifferent to them. And so also it is here in the honor I give to the word of God. It reveals a divine heart to me; it cannot but be precious to me for that. I do not give, that I am aware of, the worship which is due to God only to the words which God, by a printed

book or otherwise, may have spoken to me ; do not say any prayer to Genesis, nor lift up any voice of psalms to Apocalypse. There is no idolatry in the matter at all. An idol is "nothing in the world," and can do nothing. But if this book actually tells us something about God, about our own lives and beliefs and what these are to be, which was all dark to us before, and must have remained dark, we are not wrong in prizing it as we do. We pray you, therefore, to hold off us with your hard names, and reserve these for some fitter use. We might, indeed, if we were inclined, bid those on the other side beware of another sort of questionable worship, another *-olatry* which is not at all healthy—the worship of self. The Apostle spoke of those, in his day, whose sole god was their own belly : we have those now whose one god is their reason. And when we have so many shouting into our weary ears that reason is our only law and gospel—that that is itself the highest, the true *absolute* for us—that God is only the reflex of man's own reason, is it not about time that we should say a word against *autolatry*? Autolatry—the worship of self, whether self take the fouler form of evil desire or the higher form of reason, is getting to be rather a prevalent kind of religion in these days, and there are priests and preachers in plenty to proclaim the gospel according to that. Not a very trustworthy sort of religion, as we shall presently see, with results not always of the most wholesome sort flowing from it. Men worshipping themselves all they can, their own reason, their own wisdom—true followers, now, especially that certain nineteenth century sciences have discovered that the seat of the highest reason in man lies in the pit of his stomach, of those whom St. Paul called worshippers of their own bellies—you may guess whether that phenomenon is likely to lead to very high or heroic results. I think we had better beware of autolatry, even though it should take the highest form of which it is capable—the worship of the human reason.

In the verse which I read to you, as the text of this lecture, St. Paul tells us, that in the midst of all the wisdom of God which lay displayed to it in nature or otherwise, the world, through its own selfish and ungodly wisdom, had arrived at perfect *ignorance* of God ; and that then God, by a display of what seemed to the eye of flesh to be rather folly than wisdom, had been pleased to provide salvation to all who believed. Their own wisdom, in fact, had led men wrong—the very wisdom of God, the order of nature, the sublime laws of the universe, the prudent and careful provisions of the creation had not been able to keep them right. The light that was in themselves, with all the light that lay in the outer world, was only bringing them into deeper darkness. The creation might be a very wise thing, and the cross might seem a very foolish one ; but it was in the latter, nevertheless, that the life and salvation of the human race were to be found. It was by this special revelation, by this "foolishness of preaching," that the wants of the human reason were to be supplied. And what was found true as a fact in history expresses for us still a great truth—a truth which we will now consider, under these two propositions : 1. By reason or the wisdom of the world we can come to no sufficient knowledge of God ; and 2. It is by a spiritual revelation of Himself that

we come to know the truth, and to share the life, of God. Reason is not sufficient for our spiritual wants : the revelation of God in Christ as declared to us in the gospel, is sufficient.

I. I am not going, at present, to enter upon any question as to the nature and functions of the human reason, or whether, or in what respects it is to be distinguished from mere intellect. Such questions, or questions similar to them, may come to be considered in a future lecture. Let us, meanwhile, be content to take this word in the more general meaning of all that is immaterial in us, so far more especially as it exercises itself about questions regarding God and supernatural things, about things that are not merely seen and temporal. Surely it is no part of my office, now or at any time, to say anything derogatory of the human reason. That, I take it, is the highest thing about us, the highest gift of the highest God to us, the thing about us that shows above all else, amid the confusions and corruptions that are going, that we have been made in the image of God. We cannot be thankful enough for that, for the wisdom we get by means of that. And the highest thing about our reason is just that it fits us for receiving communications from Deity, for comprehending, when they are made to us, intimations regarding His nature and will. A revelation, let us admit, that should make no account of the reason that is in us, that should altogether overlook or violently outrage that sublime faculty, would not be a proper and fitting one for us. Revelation, when it comes, must take all that the reason actually teaches us for granted. So far as reason is able to speak the truth to us, we do not need revelation to teach us. It is only when the light of reason grows dim for us, in those regions into which its light cannot penetrate with any certainty or clearness, that we need that higher, surer teacher. It is not for revelation, for example, to prove the being of God. We have the testimony to that fact in ourselves, witnesses enough to prove that without any revelation. And God, in speaking to us by a revelation, must address us as those who have this feeling after Him alive within ourselves. What I have to say to you is just that reason, by itself, cannot teach us all we need to know about God and a Divine Will. It is not an infallible guide to us : it is a fallible one. There is nothing about us that is not liable to error even in reference to the affairs of this lower world—how much less can we expect to be without possibility of error in reference to things that are supernatural, eternal? The human mind is the greatest thing in this world, the largest of all the forces at work in the world, and it is a noble thing to see it asserting its power over nature, bringing all natural forces into subjection, laying them under contribution as conquered things, forcing everything to do its bidding. But it is too finite and frail. It can fight against disease—it cannot overcome death. It can vanquish natural things and forces—it cannot make its own sorrow less sorrowful. It gets again and again into shapeless depths of perplexity and pain, “horrible pits and miry clays,” from which it cannot deliver itself. There are grim and terrible death-shadows hanging all around it, and though it may look away from them it is not in its power to overcome them. There are oppressions and vexations of *time* which it cannot master : how much less can it master

eternity? Yes Great is the human soul—great is human reason;—if there were no God up in heaven, or One only who had tost us forth, relentlessly, into the dark night of things, and who was giving Himself no concern about us—One who in the beginning had consummately wound up the great destiny-clock, and since that first Sabbath, had been leaving it to run down even as it could—a God who had taken no pains to reveal Himself and His will to the souls He had formed, human reason would be the highest thing of all for us. We could not seek then any higher guide for ourselves, but must be content with such dim light on those unspeakable things that underlie or that overhang our lives as that can give us. But as we have reason to believe that there is a God that is taking some sort of care of the world, who is doing something to rectify the wrongs, to remedy the ills, to remove the confusions of the world: we look—we feel ourselves justified in looking—for some more reliable kind of guidance than the ever shifting, ever uncertain intimations that may arise within the soul itself can give us as to those things which lie beyond the range of our own investigation and discovery—the things of a world that is not temporal but eternal.

Yet it is no less than infallibility that is frequently, in these modern times, claimed as an attribute of the human reason in all spiritual things. We need go no farther, we are told. We are likely to fare worse if we go farther. In some quarters, indeed, reason has reached an entire *apotheosis*; has been proclaimed, by sound of philosophic or unphilosophic trumpets, to be true, absolute God of gods, to the dethronement of all other. She is the only divinity, other divinities are only as she may choose to fancy or to create them for herself. Or if there are other and soberer thinkers who do not go quite that wild length, yet they are found assigning attributes to the reason that are not much less than divine. We can only know God by the reason. The reason is the only infallible guide to us in all questions about God. This supreme arbiter, and she alone, has to settle all such matters for us. This doctrine is abundantly preached to us now. But till this much-boasted-of guide can learn to speak something like the same language unto and in all men: till it has come to do something else than deliver one thing as the absolute truth in one poor soul which it just as flatly contradicts in the next poor soul it comes to, we can hardly accept any such modern apostles' creed in reference to the supreme infallibility of reason. We have many preachers, as I said, of this religion of soul or of the reason, who are loud and energetic enough in their tone; who are not without a certain amount of earnestness in them; who, if you take their own word for it, have got very nearly a monopoly of the earnestness of this 19th century, and are entitled to look upon all other earnestness than their own as a contraband article. "Give up" they say to us, "that old superstitious belief in a mere book-revelation: that book-religion of yours is a piece of Hebrew old-clothes, nearly worn all to tatters long ago, and no longer befitting the wear of this age of enlightenment and free thought. We, with our new tailors and new garments, can no longer tolerate that. It has all gone ragged and threadbare now, that old religion, and you young men, or others who will be trying to put yourselves into it,

will be only making very stupid scarecrows of yourselves. Listen to the voice of your own souls. Trust the teachings of your own reason. Lift up your heads as free men and claim that heritage of thought which is nature's birthright to you." And this pleases our young generation, in many quarters, mightily. Considering what a very pliable teacher may be made of the reason; how the soul may be made to say all manner of strange, selfish, damnable doctrines, and may be bribed to encourage and to cover any multitude of sins of the "wild oats," or any other sort, what a pleasant nose of wax this infallible guide, under proper management, may become, to be bent and twisted as you please; and considering, further, that the old book-revelation is very much sterner and more uncompromising in its demands, of course there can be no comparison between the two things.

Reason is spoken of as if it were infallible in its teachings; and yet it is allowed that her teachings alter, that she does not always just say the same thing. Let me refer you for a moment to a book in which this contradiction is so palpably brought out as to make the whole thing simply ridiculous. Mr. Newman, having inverted St. Paul's plan, and being now employed in despising the faith which formerly he preached, has seen meet to enlighten the world as to those different "phases of faith" through which the ill-guided soul of him has had to pass. He recounts to us the different stages of that path which has led him from the belief of an outward revelation to that faith in reason which he now professes. In the "Phases of Faith" Mr. Newman sets himself up as his own showman. "This, fair sirs, is what I once was, a firm believer in the written word, an evangelical, a Calvinist, a millenarian. And such things have come not to suit me any more. I have been obliged to give up all these things and have abandoned them for such reasons as I show you. Could you desire better proof than I afford, that your orthodox religion is all moonshine, vanity, and lies, and this new religion of reason in which you see me bearing myself so bravely is the absolute, the eternal truth? Here was I, a young earnest soul, bound down and fettered in this absurd way; a very young eagle, caged, and with his pinions cut, and now I have made my escape and am cleaving the empyrean, cuffing the blue air, by the sublime force of reason, as you see. I was really a very earnest believer in this or that doctrine of revelation once; the doctrine for a while was even not without its use to me, though now it has all gone to corruption and death for me." Which no doubt it has, and one can only wish the offensive thing, instead of being made into a book, to be fairly buried and out of sight. It is, on the whole, one of the painfulest books to read, exhibiting such an unhealthy dissertation of Mr. Newman's self or selves; a sort of sickening *post mortem* examination of the different religious personalities he has once been and now is no more. Or shall we be a little more moderate in our estimate of the book, and speak of it as only a kind of Monmouth street exhibition of Mr. Newman's religious old clothes, which are of no more use to himself, which he asks us only to look at, and under the form of a book, to buy? We having no taste for Mr. Newman's cast-off garments, under any form, would, on the whole, prefer remaining in that

unwholesome neighborhood as short a time as possible. All we have to ask at present is only this—Did Mr. Newman who professes to believe in reason as an infallible guide, while the book-revelation is altogether fallible, only come to the possession of reason after he had abandoned all faith in the book? Or was reason, with all her infallibility, telling him one thing in his orthodox days, and is she telling him quite an opposite thing now? Or perhaps, has he not been a little *unreasonable* all along?

In reference to the guidance which reason can give us in reference to religious, supernatural, spiritual matters, I have to say:

1. That the information it gives us is variable and imperfect; that the God in fact, of whom it testifies, is variable. Our notions of God may become different from day to day. The God of whom reason alone tells us changes his fashion and likeness with our varying thought, and is not at all the same to-day as he may have been yesterday. Let us for a moment or two more refer to Mr. Newman and his experience in such matters. Of him we might reasonably ask how many gods he, whose thoughts have been altering so much about divine matters, has worshipped in the course of his life. The sort of god he now looks up to is a different being, with quite a different character from the one he tried to worship formerly,—different from the God of revelation whom he accepted of old as the only Right Ruler of this universe. Yet we are to suppose that he himself had something like reason in him all the while. But reason, if he is right now, must have led him wrong before, or suffered itself and him to be led wrong, which was a very naughty thing in the infallible guide to do. The reason is always right, mark you—you cannot be wrong in following that. And yet it changes; changes so that, *teste newman ipso*, you may be found walking right up in the teeth of some former conviction of the reason. This guide of our belief is to be taken as always right, only its conclusions are not unfrequently wrong, which is a pity. And then, too, it is further to be observed that, whatever my reason be teaching me, there are also a few other souls in the world who have all got reason in them too, more or less, many of whom are believing quite different, even quite contrary things to those which I hold. There are some who are still believing as they can in a plurality of deities, in "gods many and lords many," notwithstanding all evidence to the contrary, or who are trying to get on without any god at all. Does reason teach one thing to the free thinker of whatever school in Britain or Germany, another to the follower of Buddh or Confucius in China, another thing to the Brahmin in Bengal, or the Parsee in Bombay, and yet a different thing to the follower of the Prophet in Arabia and Egypt. We may, of course, be told that there are some fundamental things that reason teaches everywhere, and that all differing forms of worship are only the accidental coverings in which said fundamental truths have got themselves veiled. It is a pity that this trustworthy guide does not make the proper distinction always between what is essential and what is, non-essential. If we attempt the task of eliminating all that is accidental, we shall surely find that those fundamental truths of the reason are exceedingly few. The list of them, if we are only to take those on which all men are agreed, must be a very brief

one indeed. We should be thankful to any one who would tell us what they are.

2. Again: the reason, which is finite, can give us no adequate idea or knowledge of God, who is infinite. The task which human reason, in these days of thought, seems to have taken on herself is to re-construct the idea of a God out of the confusion of all the creeds that are going in the world. Things have all gone to sheer wreck in this way of creeds, so men say, and we must set about building these waste places from the very beginning again. A very hopeless task, as I take the liberty of thinking, for the reason of man, groping about in the dark, after such unspeakable things; likely to end, just as St. Paul says it did long ago, in the world, by its wisdom, coming to have no knowledge of God at all. There were also earnest and heroic minds, not without a desire to get possession of the truth in those old heathen days to which St. Paul refers. But it was not the knowledge of the Highest they were able to bring themselves and the world to. They had taken the wrong plan for that. They felt themselves driven again and again, like some "strong swimmer in his agony," from the face of the frowning rock back into the weltering deep again. Their wisdom, such as it was, was not enough, alone, to sound the depths of infinity, of eternity, to drag those mysteries of Godhead which were faintly looming through on them out of the grey mists of the things that surrounded them. When we think of Socrates or Plato, doing battle as they could with all the doubts and darkness that were round them, forced to confess how little they knew or could know about supernatural, eternal things, and think again of the self-asserting arrogance of some of our modern wise ones, who are ready, on the briefest notice, to solve all mysteries for us, to climb for us the sublime firmament of all truth, it may give rise to other than the most joyful thoughts in us. For, after all, they know so little about God, so little of what we need to know. With all their searching, they cannot find out that Almighty One to any perfection. Finite reason can see but a little way into the mysteries of the Infinite, nor tell us what the Infinite is like—what an Infinite God is like. For in its very efforts at comprehending what is infinite, it necessarily limits it—deprives it of its infinite character. And in reference to the more practical question as to how the unspeakable God stands related to us, it cannot give us the aid we seek. Does His Infinitude remove Him to an *infinite* distance from us, or bring Him Infinitely near? Does it shut Him out from any interest in our cares and ills, or does it not make Him take the deepest concern in these? Does it take Him away beyond sun and stars, where no thought of ours can follow or reach Him, or does it not rather bring Him home to our very hearts and souls? What are we to think of it all? What rest or peace is there for us in such questions which we cannot answer? For reason, here, can give us but the very faintest "echo of reply;" it cannot tell us what Infinite Being may possibly mean, nor give us any satisfactory picture of what the Infinite God must be.

3. And yet again: Reason without light of revelation, has not in itself the elements for coming to any trustworthy conclusion about God. It must, of course, judge and conclude according to what lies within its

own knowledge. It must form its conception of God's being from what it sees about God's doings. We may, no doubt, have some sort of dim, intuitional persuasion about God. There are philosophers who tell us so. I suppose it must be so. But that does not go very far with us. We must soon go to seek other than barely intuitional knowledge of God. And where shall the reason find the knowledge of God? In the wisdom of God—the display of Divine wisdom in the works of nature—in the laws of providence, as creation or history unfolds them to us, we have, no doubt, testimonies as to whether and what God is. Nature, doubtless, does bear witness to us of a God, all-wise and all-powerful. But very dimly does it tell us of what the moral character of God is. It does not make us realize the actual love of God to any very large extent. There are phenomena in nature that leave all conclusions about His Infinite Mercy very dark. We cannot discover enough of the Divine plan to make us see through that darkness. We see sorrow and death and hear through the dimness of time, the sigh of breaking, the feeble wail of broken, hearts. We see no very sharp distinction made between just and unjust, but one event happening alike unto all. Our lives begin in pain, and end again in suffering and death. Grief and woe surround us as we travel onwards, and that “gloomy shadow, feared of men,” awaits us all at the close. And what can reason tell us, sufficient to lighten our burden, to alleviate our pain, to give light upon our darkness? When some life dear to us as our own has been quenched, and has gone out for us, so that we can enjoy the light of it no more, and we must drink the bitter cup that some ruling power of the world has presented to us—what are we to think of Him who has appointed it so? We are suffering, almost without consolation, and God has meant that it should be so. You tell us, reason teaches us, that others must suffer just the same; it is the universal lot, the inevitable law. Very likely—but what comfort is there for me in that? In that!—that I have a God who deals thus hardly with all He has made, who dashes the cup of joy from all their lips, and gives them a chalice of sorrow and woe instead. That He who rules over us will not leave us long in the enjoyment of any happiness, but ever suddenly, as if He were grudging the sight, is snatching it away! I need to know something better, more hopeful about Him than this. I am not seeking after the knowledge of a God who delights in pain or wretchedness. I should pray rather to be delivered out of the hands of such a God as that. But reason can give us no higher comfort in the midst of our sorrows than this, of a universal lot of pain, and of inevitable doom. And it can give us no great light on the gloom of the grave. It may whisper dimly of immortality, but even that is dark to it. It can judge of the God that is beyond the grave only according to what it sees of God here. And to the vexed, distressed soul who may be feeling, in his loneliness, that God has nothing but sorrow or affliction to send him, it is not a cheerful thought—that of having to meet a God just like that after life is over. If He has been hard upon him here, what reason has he to believe that He will be less hard upon him afterwards? Reason, therefore, can tell us nothing trustworthy here, but

must, for the most part, leave us just to stumble on into the great darkness, submitting ourselves, as we best may, to the inevitable, since no better can be for us. The god of whom reason can tell us, is not the Father in Heaven, who leads us tenderly, lovingly, through all the trials of earth and brings us home at last, to be ever with Himself.

II. If there is a God, therefore, we need some other sort of manifestation of Him than our own reasons, alone, can give us. It is necessary that we should not be left here to our own thoughts and feelings alone; that we should have some more trustworthy revelation than these can possibly be. And we have such a revelation, as we believe, in the Bible. We believe that that is the outward form under which the revelation of God comes to us. There was a time, of course, when that book did not exist just as it does now, when it was growing up to its present completeness, when the words which are now written down there were being first of all spoken by the prophets or by the Son of God. Now, by God's grace, those words have been collected and form this volume for us, which, as we feel sure, contains a statement of what God would have us believe in reference to eternal things, of what God would have us do, as those who are having an interest in eternal things—in Eternal Life. That is what we believe about the Bible; till we get better reasons for giving that belief up than we have got yet, we shall take the liberty of retaining it. The coldness and the barrenness of rationalistic, "relentless criticism," the strenuous efforts made, in late years, to prove this Bible a fable and a lie, have not yet succeeded in making its Divine character an unbelievable thing. Of course, I am not going now—that would be quite foreign to my present purpose—to enter upon any consideration of different theories of inspiration—of the nature, measure, or mode of the inspiration enjoyed by the writers of the Bible. Neither can I, to-night, take up the time allowed us by considering any of those special objections from alleged inconsistencies or contradictions, alleged faults in history, faults in science and what not, that have been brought against the sacred book. There is a whole crop of such objections growing in certain quarters, and we shall have to take a look or two at them in some future lectures. But at present we can occupy ourselves only with a more general view of the subject. We have only these two questions to think of for a little to-night. 1. Whether it was at all a likely thing that God should give us such a revelation as the Bible professes to be; and 2. Whether the Bible is such a revelation as we might have expected God to give us?

1. The grounds on which we may be able to form a judgment, in reference to the first of these two questions, have been already indicated. We are in want of something more, in the way of spiritual enlightenment and guidance, than reason or any of the wisdom of the world can give us. Whatever you may say of the possibility or impossibility of actual knowledge, in reference to super-mundane matters, you cannot keep men from thinking about them, from earnestly desiring some light upon them. Men, in all ages, in all lands, have been groping about as in dark places after God and things of God. But things have mainly

remained quite dark for the unaided reason of man. Reason, we may say, had a fair trial, and did not come very well out of that work of seeking after God. Yet reason, nevertheless, may help us in the comprehension of God when in any way or by any means He is revealed to us. Just as we are able to take in *any* truth when it is revealed to us—the truths of science, when the objects of science are able to manifest themselves to us, or the truths of history, when these are actually opened up to us; and as we do not make the truth in any matter for ourselves, but only accept it when it is disclosed, so it is also here. The human reason cannot invent or make any truth about God—it must only accept what amount of truth in reference to Him may be declared to it. And as God lies beyond the ordinary range of human discovery, we must have Him in some way manifesting Himself to the reason before reason can know aught about Him. It would, further, be contrary to the general order of His working, to suppose Him making a special, infallible revelation of Himself in each human soul. We know very well, from the best of all evidence, that such special revelations have not been made in all. It would have been a very unwise provision in the natural world, if each particular creature had only had light enough in itself to serve its own purpose, while there had been no great central orb from which the light proceeded. And in the spiritual world—the world of soul and reason, may we not say—it would have been equally unwise, if there had been no appeal made to the universal conscience, if each separate soul had no more light than what was to serve itself, and then had been left wholly to its own resources? It was not unreasonable, therefore, that God should make a general revelation of Himself—a revelation which should be good for all who would not just remain dark and blind to it. For the need of man was universal; the sorrow and the pain belonged to the race. And we needed a light that was not in ourselves alone, needed a message from without, in reference to the truth we could not ourselves discover. We needed some explanation of the meaning and object of all our grief and loneliness here. We needed some display of God's love and mercy to be made, not to, or in ourselves individually, but to the race to which we belong. We needed some light that would give us understanding, more or less clear, of the great mystery of the grave, of the solemn secret of immortality. We needed words to be spoken to us by God Himself, which all men, everywhere, might trust. And as there was a conscience in us that testified of wrong and evil, and as we felt that we could not put ourselves right, but that the evil was a sin that needed forgiveness, we wanted some declaration of forgiveness to be made to us. And supposing God had once spoken thus among men, we would just have expected further that the revelation would have been written down for the learning of all times, that it would not be left to the idle breath of tradition, to be blown down the centuries by that, but should be transmitted as a book, whose "written letter remains," which cannot be affected, except to the very smallest extent, by any of time's rude changes, which should bind together, in one common belief, all Christian lands and centuries. It was not at all

contrary to the order of things that God should do that—it is what we might fairly have expected. Just think, what a gloomy road we should have had to travel, without any light of revelation.

But, 2. Does the Bible contain such a revelation of God and of Divine things as we might have expected God to give us? If we might have expected a book telling us what we could not find out for ourselves in reference to all that is supernatural, is the Bible that book, or are we to look for it elsewhere? Is this sacred book of the Christian faith such a guide for us, in matters of faith and of practice, as we needed—as we might have looked for? I think, my friends, we have reason enough to believe that it is. If we look at it with healthy, not with diseased eyes, we find in it that which it was needful for us to know. We have God there manifesting Himself as a God of Infinite Love and Mercy, watching over us, caring for us, seeking to save us from all sin and sorrow. We see there a God who hates all wrong, and is desirous, therefore, in all things to put us right. We meet there with a Heavenly Father, not a Being only of infinite power and wisdom, surrounding Himself only with cold laws of nature, ruling us by hard and terrible destiny, but sympathizing with our wants and woes, and ready to help us in them. By the wisdom of the world, the men of the world cannot come to know God; “by the foolishness of preaching,” of the word read or preached, God has declared salvation unto us, unto all who believe the truth He has revealed. Salvation and Eternal Life lie for us in God’s revelation of Himself. He saves them that believe by this means: saves them from their ignorance, from their sin, from all the oppressions and disorders of time. Their belief grows to knowledge, actual knowledge of a Father, revealed in Christ. So that, strong in the power of that truth which has been revealed to them, they can face the ills, and bear the trials of life, and walk safely through all its darker places, and take its mingled cup of gladness and pain, as confident in a Father’s love. They know One who has Himself borne sorrow and death, and has brought God near to us in them. They know that sin itself—the evil that troubles them most, that comprehends all others—has been borne and taken away, and that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ. They have an Eternal Life revealed in them, formed in them, through the power of a Divine Spirit. There is a light of life that casts itself full over the dark Valley of the Shadow of Death itself, and all because the Eternal God has spoken to them—because the record of His words lies in those Holy Scriptures. Ah! Is it not so? Is there not many a poor, wearied, lonely soul, for whom pain has lost the most of its bitterness, and all the oppressive narrowness of time has become alleviated, and the *Achor* valley has brightened into a door of hope, through confidence in a loving God, who has not kept Himself concealed from the soul in its loneliness? Many an aching heart, worn almost to death in fighting the sore battle of life for itself, which is finding unspeakable rest on the very bosom of God? Many a poor “prisoner of hope,” sitting by the brink of Death’s cold flood, with its pitchy waters rolling eerily, cheerlessly below, whose soul is being solaced, as by words of welcome from beyond, who knows

already that death is all swallowed up in victory? And as there are many getting courage to die, so there are many getting courage to live—getting new strength for all they may yet have to suffer or to do on earth. Blessed be God, that still, amid the confusions and distractions of time, all that is true. “The wisdom of the world” may toss its proud head in scorn at this “foolishness” of the faith, may brand it as superstition or by any other questionable name it may choose, but the confidence of the tried, believing heart does not need to grow less or to confess itself a mistake and a lie on that account. It has God’s word to trust to, and all the philosophy of the world cannot make that word less trustworthy.

One great,—in the eyes of an unbelieving philosophy, a fatal objection against the truth of the Bible revelation arises from the *miraculous* character of much of its contents. It runs across our science, don’t you see, in the absurdest fashion, does not trouble itself about our science at all, and tells stories to us which our knowledge of natural laws enables us to pronounce impossible. There are so many miracles recorded there, and we, with our high scientific attainments, will have nothing to do with them. They are, so we have settled it, empty tales of a credulous, superstitious age, not worthy of our belief in an age of enlightenment. An age of enlightenment, mark you, that still feels itself wonderfully attracted by the miraculous, and will stare at crazy tables that turn as they are wanted, and listen, as to a Divine revelation, to rappings made, as it fondly believes, by members of a spiritual world, who certainly, to judge by their utterances, are quite as silly as if they had never gone out of the flesh. We must, of course, discard, at once, the miracles of Jesus: we may still think of the miracles of senseless timber. The miracles of Jesus had at least some good purpose in them. They were not mere wonders—if they were, I, for one, would not care to say much about them—the wonder is surely the least thing about them. But they are thought to contradict our laws of nature, the order of things which we have, at last, discovered for ourselves. Well: if they are contradictions of natural order, that may be only a sign that there is a higher and a better order than nature’s, that nature’s order is still imperfect, and certainly quite consistent with an endless amount of sin and misery, that the order of God’s kingdom, the order which God, by all revelations of Himself, is seeking to establish, is one that is to fight against and to overcome the sin and misery that are here. A miracle is simply something higher than our *ideas* of natural order. Ice may seem something quite miraculous to the savage who lives within the Torrid Zone, and fields that are always green and a soil that is ever fruitful may seem no less to the dweller amid perpetual snow. And even the highest notions that civilized man can form about natural order may be something infinitely short of God’s order. If we knew more than we do of what God’s counsels are, we might see that the miracles done by Jesus and His disciples rested only upon a wider and a deeper law than any merely scientific one, that they were not destructions of order, that they were rather restitutions of order—prophecies of a wider and more perfect restitution yet to come. Are

there not, in fact, now extant in the world, traces of a great breach of order, which the devil, or some power of evil—we are not going to quarrel about the name—has managed somehow to get introduced into the world. We cannot imagine that wretchedness or iniquity are at all in harmony with God's ultimate order of the universe; or that He made the world with the object of giving these a permanent, an eternal place *there*. But these are quite in harmony with any natural order that man has yet discovered for himself. Jesus who, as we believe, came into the world to fight against all evil, "to destroy all works of the Devil," had to bear witness, by miracle or otherwise, that evil was not of God's *ordering*, that God's attitude towards that is not to establish it as an order of things at all, but to fight against it as a transgression of order. It is quite consistent with the present constitution of things that a man be born blind, should grow up under that painful defect, and find no natural means to put him right. Christ, by miraculously curing one such individual whom nature had made dark, has told us that the order that God has appointed is that men should see. It is the order of nature that men should be subject to suffering, pain, and disease. Christ by His healing of disease and all human ailments, has testified to us that it is the Father's will that these ultimately should cease as part of the order of His world. It is quite consistent with the present order of things that many men and women should starve and suffer hunger, as they are still doing to no slight extent, with philosophy troubling her dainty fingers as little as possible about them. By that miraculous feast in the Bethsaida desert, Jesus has declared to us that it is not the Father's will that men should starve, that it is a breach of His true order of things that dooms them to hunger; that, whatever oppressive laws of nature may say, it is God's purpose to abolish starvation as a prevailing phenomenon in His universe. It is but too mournfully apparent that devils—powers of evil, at least, whether you choose to call them by that name or no—are doing their deadly and damnable work, in spite of all natural law, or, rather, quite in accordance with that, so far as the philosophers have yet expounded it to us. By those miracles of demon-expulsion, Jesus declared that it was God's will that all powers of wickedness should be forced to take themselves off out of the world into their own place. Death is the supreme law of nature; nature gives us no hint of any deliverance from that. When Jesus raised the dead, He declared to us that life, not death, was the order of God's kingdom, that it is His pleasure that death should be overcome, should be abolished. Through the mists and darkness of time, therefore, glimpses of God's eternal order, higher, more glorious than nature's, which is temporal, have reached us, showing us that all wrong is to be righted, that all evil is to be overcome, that the world is to become altogether godly at last. We needed no revelation from God to make any natural order known to us—this supernatural order was something that we did want to know something of. The miracles of Christ declared it to us, have given us glimpses of what it is—glimpses, commending themselves to our consciences, as altogether certain, though lying far back now in the grey centuries, bearing

steadfast, trustworthy witness to us of the eternal kingdom of love as well as of power or wisdom that is lying all round us here, pressing more and more through the thin time walls, till at last it shall have scattered all the shadows, and made an end of the vanities and sins of time, and thrown disease and sorrow, sin and death, out of the the world, and swept back all the hell-fires that have been kindled here into the place appointed for them—till earth's confusions shall have been all removed, and earth's wrongs all rectified, and Divine Love shall have triumphed over all evil, and the nearer presence of the Lord shall have rid the world, once and for ever, of the presence of the Devil, and of all Devils.—AMEN.

LECTURE III.

MAN AND GOD.

GEN. I. 27:—So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him.

I HAVE called the subject of this Lecture, *Man and God*. If my object in these discourses had been a purely theological one the title ought rather, of course, to have been *God and Man*. For from the theological point of view, we must ever take God as the source and beginning of all truth and knowledge, and man as having all his spiritual possession only in and through God. But, at present, we must follow a different mode of investigation. Our plan renders it incumbent on us to begin with the known, and proceed upwards as we can toward that which is not *naturally* known: from that which is seen towards that which is unseen: from the finite and temporal to the infinite, eternal, and absolute. We are, therefore, to take man as we find him here, with his brief, uncertain life, surrounded by cares and questionings, by all his troubles and shadows of time, with his great, but bounded, power, but a intellect, reason, will—all that he is or appears to be, and to see that there is that connects him with a Higher reason and a more, is on us will than his own—with an Almighty and Infinite God. I spoke have already, in the first Lecture, of the relation subsisting between a feeling and a God of Nature. But this time it is not nature alone upon phenomena, forces, and laws—but man, the spiritual, our higher than these, that we have to consider. It is not from nature, in fact, but the world of soul and spirit that we are to contemplate in connexion with a Supreme Creator. Eternal on this *anthropological* basis we are to enquire into the true source of man's spiritual being to its true source; to see, haply, in the dimness of earthly things, we may be, haply, in the plan and purpose we are here set to fulfil, and what the thought of Him who made us, and what the thought of Him who made us into the world. What is man, and in what is he eternal? How has he come to realize the eternal, the idea of the Eternal at all? What is his true God. With the sad and perplexing, and is not

him, around him—where his way becomes often painful and perilous, where many have gone wandering hopelessly over fatal abysses of despair, into devouring mires and valleys of the shadow of death; has there, nevertheless, been a chain let down for him out of heavenly, invisible places, which if a man lays hold on, he shall be right and safe, preserved amid all the despair and the pain of such a world as this? Has light from Eternity actually been pressing in upon the time-narrowed souls of men, enabling them to see and to know One above them, worthy of all reverence, whom it was infinitely good for them, amid the prevailing perplexities, errors and sins of earth, to worship? Or is it a delusion, all this—a foolish fable only, vain and unprofitable as a morning dream? Is man alone and uncared for in this world, and all his thoughts about God or any Being higher than himself nothing better than a fond imagination, built up, like an inverted pyramid, on no adequate foundation at all, and ready, now that the winds of a scientific age are blowing fiercely on it, to topple over into sheer wreck and ruin? Is man, after all, the highest, the supreme, absolute being in the universe, or is there a Higher than he, who orders his way for him, who has a right to some obedience from him?

It sounds wonderful enough, no doubt, but it is the actual fact that the one alternative which a proud infidel philosophy is, in many quarters of it, presenting for our acceptance, is no other than this: is it God, as the *theologians* say, has created man in His own image; or is it not man, as we *anthropologists* tell you that has created God—the idea of God after his own human image? The bible, as is apparent from the text and a host of other passages, very plainly declares the first of these statements to be the right one. There are plenty of modern thinkers, Feuerbach for example in his essence of Christianity, who vehemently enough assert the second. We are told, if we wait to listen to such teachers that man at different times and in different ways, according to the degree of culture to which he had attained, has been making gods for himself in his own likeness, and that the God of the Christians, though a higher and more creditable effort in that line than most, is still nothing more than the reflex of the reason of those men, Jews or others, who took to manufacturing the idea of Him out of their own brains. Such notions may seem, when fairly and plainly expressed, to be altogether horrible and blasphemous to you. But as they are getting themselves taught, with more or less success in these days, and finding souls not a few, which have some power of thought in them, ready to give them a not unwilling reception, it is necessary for us to wait and see what the actual worth of them is. We are told that man himself is the highest object of human thought, that all objects which he fancies to himself as higher than his own nature are no more than the creations of his own imagination, the product of his own reason. For man, the true absolute is just man's own nature. He cannot with all his striving, get above or beyond that. All that he attempts with a view to get above that, to get to the comprehension of being higher than his own,—of the One Being especially, who is Infinite, Eternal,

and Absolute, is but the effort of his consciousness to form an object for itself, whereas its one true object ever is *itself*. Man has in him certain tendencies to worship which he does not know very well what to do with, and he forms objects of worship and calls them God, and bows down to them, and sings his hymns and lifts his voice in prayer to them; but if he knew himself a little better, he would see that it is himself after all, his own feeling or reason that comprehends in itself that which he has imagined outside of himself. The power which that idea of God which he has originated exercises over him is only the power of his own feeling or will. He has made a god for himself, in fact, a god in his own image, the reflex of his own intellectual or moral nature, and, of course, having nothing better to do he falls down to worship the deity he has thought out for himself. Which surely is an odd enough interpretation of this business of worship which men have been doing in the world for so long, and does not in itself demand very much consideration from us probably, however forcibly it may be preached to us. That, however, I take as about the only alternative presented to us, if we give up the teaching of the bible and of all sound Christianity in reference to man's relation to an Almighty Creator, and calls for our consideration in that, if in no other respect. Let us look it in the face therefore for a little, and see what it has got to say to us, what in the world *we* have got to do with it.

Let us hear, for example, what Feuerbach, one of the strictest of all strict untheistical anthropologists, has got to say to us here. The root of all theology—all belief in deity is in this one fact, according to him, that "Man is nothing without an object," that he therefore seeks to *object* all his own needs and wants. When he has not an object ready made to meet any want, he makes one, and therefore, to meet his need of worship, he imagines God as a proper object for himself and for his worship. Well, man, no doubt, is nothing without an object, without a multitude of objects. All the powers that are in us are employed on that which is outside of us, something which is not in ourselves, but acts on us from without, *which is not we*. When we think, our thoughts have something external to themselves which forms their object. The feeling which we exercise must have something beside itself to exercise itself upon. While the *subject* that thinks, or feels, or wills is ever ourselves, our individual *I*, there is something which is "not I," quite distinct from me, which forms the corresponding object. Modern materialistic philosophy is content to call the objective in general, *nature*, not at all caring to look any higher than that. All that is not just ourselves, that lies without us, that we can turn into material of thought or will, is comprehended under this convenient term. But is there not something higher than that? Does not the instinct of man teach him to think of something higher? What indeed is that Nature of which we hear so much? It is not absolute, but limited: is there not some One above it who is unlimited? And is there not that in us which seeks after some belief in that Absolute, Incomprehensible God as its true object,—that gropes after Him amid whatever darkness, and is not

satisfied till it find Him? And if for other things or feelings in us we find the proper objects around us, why should not there also be a fitting object for this feeling of reverence, belief, worship.

Feuerbach admits that it is quite natural that man should thus seek an absolute object for himself. So long as he has not come to the sense, the consciousness of the absolute in himself, he will naturally seek it without himself. But the objective, he urges further, is just that which we make it, what it becomes to or in us. No object whatever is exactly the same thing to you as it is to me. To me it is what I have made it in my mind; to you it is what you have made it in yours. It exists under altogether different conditions for you and for me. And when man grows conscious of any object therefore, he is only growing conscious of himself, growing a little in self-consciousness. All this, my friends, about subject and object, the *I* and the *not I*, consciousness and self-consciousness must seem dreary enough to you, I have no doubt, and we must try and get out of it all as soon as we can. But we have got this tangled brake in our way meanwhile and must make our way through it as we can. What we are taught by this philosophy is, that the object, which is outside of us, is ever both in the philosophic and the popular sense *subject* to us, that we can make of it very much what we like, according to the laws of our being. The object changes: it is the subject—the *I*, that is absolute and does not change. And Herr Feuerbach to enforce his meaning, ventures on an illustration, rather an unlucky one, I think. The Sun is an object which all the planets have in common, which Venus and Jupiter, Saturn and the Earth look up to as the source of their light and heat. But the sun exists under different conditions for each. It is not the same sun that we see that is beheld in Saturn, but one of far greater brilliancy and warmth than the one the Saturnians see. Each of the planets has in fact a different sun; each has in its sun a mirror of its own nature, of its own power of seeing, or whatever else. To some small extent we may admit this to be true, but as it happens that it was not the Earth, nor Venus, nor Jupiter, nor any other, nor yet a public meeting of the whole, that created the sun for their mutual benefit, it is not very apparent how that affects the question. The Sun has a certain density, a certain distance from us, a certain place in heaven, and a few other things that are true about him, quite apart from the seeing or other powers of any of the planets. And if he is different to us from what he is to other planets, it is not that there has been any change in him or in his shining. The *object* remains the same in spite of all the self or other consciousnesses throughout the solar system: the *subjects* that look at him only are different. And, at all events, in order to make this illustration of any value in the theistic or atheistic controversy, the right conclusions would have to be that as the Sun is quite a different object in each several planet, as Mercury forms one conception of him and Jupiter quite a different one, as Venus has her consciousness affected in one way by him and the Earth hers in quite a different way, therefore there is no actual Sun at all, that it exists only in the consciousness

of each planet, that for us it exists only in the dreamings of a fertile imagination or in the thoughts of a mere rational consciousness. Which I take on the whole to be rather a hazardous conclusion, whatever amount of philosophy, or the opposite, there may be in it.

This sort of idealism becomes thus, to the unphilosophic mind, simply absurd when carried out to its legitimate consequences in reference to objects in nature—objects with which the senses bring us into connexion. But in reference to God, the senses, at least, have no protest to offer against any conclusion, however absurd it may otherwise be proved to be. All about Him lies beyond the range of the senses. There is a fair field, therefore, for our subjective, idealistic philosophers. Man, therefore, they go on to tell us, "being nothing without an object," feeling lonely, I suppose, without that in reference to supersensual things, provides such an object for himself, which he calls God. He wishes to rise to the highest development of self-consciousness, or whatever they call it, of which he is capable: as he has much difficulty in *realizing* himself up to the extent of his needs, he only *idealizes* himself, and calls his idea God. Makes a God for himself, in fact, as I said already, endowing Him with his own attributes, raised to some infinite or less than infinite power—attributes which sprung out of his own consciousness by some strange process or another. Thus, man has a dread of limitation—does not at all like to be bounded or hemmed in in any way; and, therefore, God is pictured as Infinite. He has a fear of death, of the cutting of life's frail thread, the snapping of life's brittle chain; time, in fact, is much too narrow for him; and, therefore, God becomes Eternal in his eyes. He does not like injustice, at least, where himself is the victim; and, therefore his consciousness invests God with the character of perfect righteousness. He feels the promptings of affection towards those who are near him, and wishes their love back again, and, therefore, God is a God of Love, an Infinite All-Father. Here is actually the whole process of God-making described to us. If you think I am misrepresenting the teachings of such infidel philosophers, I can only tell you that their books are in the market, and that he who runneth may read, if he does not think it safer to run without reading. All our thoughts about God are thus to be regarded, just as so many *anthropomorphisms* and efforts of man to create Deity in his own image. Well: it is sad enough, no doubt, but this sort of gospel, which seems to have travelled from a very questionable quarter is verily coming in upon us, tending to destroy the faith of some. We were to look that in the face for a little, I said: I trust it will not need to be for long. We return to that aphorism of Feuerbach's: "Man is nothing without an object." The question always remains, did he create his object, or has it an existence independent of him? Whatever the idealist may say, the common sense of humanity tells that we create nothing. The object exists without us, and would be there all the same whether we were here or no. Self-consciousness may be all well enough in its own way, if once you get to understand what it means; but it is not the universe.

In spite of all Fichte's philosophies, Hegel's philosophies, or whatever the name of them be, things have a being of their own, apart from all human consciousness. The mirror of our minds does not create even the picture, far less the reality, that is external to us. And if different minds apprehend an object differently, that does not prove that the object itself is not there, but only that the power of apprehension in most minds may be rather imperfect. And if this be true in all other objects, no less is it true also of God, the Supreme, Absolute Object. Different men may have different ideas about Him, but that does not make Him different. Each human consciousness does not create its own several God for itself, but only tries, feebly and darkly enough, to form some thought of the God that is. As the sun remains the same, however differently he may appear to different beings who look upon him, who rejoice in his splendour or bask in his warmth, so too of Him who made the sun. He, differently regarded, it may be, by different human or other souls, remains in His own nature evermore the same, infinite, unchangeable in all gracious and holy attributes. Smaller or greater glimpses of His glory reach us and all His creatures, and from the little that is discernible to us, we, blinded by these time-fogs, may form but imperfect or defective or even wrong conceptions of what He Himself is. But far above all the dimness and the gloom of this mortal life, above all the clouds that hang over us, above the veil that covers Him from our sight, He dwells in that light; inaccessible, full of glory, where there is no cloud, no darkness, no shadow at all. And thus, when we look into ourselves and discover that all our powers have some proper object on which they can each employ themselves, which they did not create for themselves, but which has been provided for them, we feel assured that those feelings that prompt us to worship have a fitting object for themselves too, that they would not have been there if an absolute, infinite object were not existing outside of and above ourselves; One who has exclusive right to all our adoration and reverence. Always that which is in us answers to that which is without us. Man is an intelligent being, full of thoughts which stretch back into the past, that look forth into the future, and, therefore, he finds himself in a sphere, all whose scenes and things stir thought in him. He has got an *emotional* nature in him, a heart that naturally feels, as well as a soul that is fitted to know, and, therefore, the world in which he dwells is full of objects that appeal to his love, or gratitude, or admiration. But there are higher sentiments still within him that find no fitting objects amid all that, naturally, the senses can disclose to him. He seeks—cannot help seeking, after communion with the Infinite, the Eternal. He cannot suffer his nature, his life, to be hopelessly hemmed in within the too narrow horizon of things seen and temporal. He has been constituted a religious, a worshipping animal. Through the force of the spiritual nature that is in him he is driven to look out for some object on which he can set those feelings of solemn reverence that stir his soul. He does not make that object. Deeply conscious that the object is there, he only ardently seeks after it. The narrowness

of time leads him out into eternity. The narrow space he occupies testifies to him of what is infinite. But the Infinite, the Eternal, cannot be dead for him: they are alive. There is an Eternal, Infinite Heart in them—a living God. He has never been deceived in his search after an object in any other department of his life: is he to be deceived here? Is this consciousness within him only a fancy, a delusion? Is it not rather—he feels persuaded that it is—the feeble reflection within himself of that which *is*. He is not creating anything for himself: it is the solemn truth that is forcing itself in upon him in spite of all his narrowness and ignorance. He cannot help himself. He must worship Him who is manifesting Himself as so altogether *worshipful*.

From the painful picture on which we have had to look for a little, of men employed in the vain attempt to shew how God is only the creation of human consciousness—how men in different ways have been creating God in their own image, let us turn now to the very opposite picture presented to us in our text, of God creating man in *His* image. To us, I trust, God and a kingdom of God are not a mere *fata morgana* city, reflected from waste places of the earth or caused by refracted sun-beams and dry atmosphere, and the fact of God's Being is something more than an empty vision of man's over-burdened fancy. We believe—I think we have had reason to see that we are not wrong in believing—that there is an Infinite Presence round us amid all the perplexities and disorders of time; an Infinite Eye beaming down in light and love upon us through all the dark; the voice of an Eternal speaking to us from invisible heavens, the echos of which, heard, often indistinctly enough, God knows, amid the world's loud roar, are still cheering and encouraging to us; the hand even of a Heavenly Father keeping and delivering us amid all our distresses and pains, unlocking for us the secrets, the blessednesses of Eternity. And we are not to be moved out of our confidence by talk, however loud, of *anthropomorphism*, or by theories about God as the bare reflex of human reason. We *have* a true object for all our trust and worship; One to whom we may become like, however unlike Him we may often have been making ourselves—One in whose image indeed man has been made, however much he may have marred the likeness. What if this nature of ours be itself rather a *theomorphism*; the reflex of Almighty Reason—of Infinite Will? What if all that is best and truest in us be but the dim and faint shadow and picture of something infinitely higher in a Being that is from everlasting to everlasting? This, at least, is the representation of things afforded us in those old Hebrew records, which we have learnt to look upon as holy and divine. This is the plain statement of our text, and, on the whole, does it not seem a more satisfactory, even a more rational interpretation of things than the other?

Man is the only being actually known to us here on the earth, who can form, to himself, any idea of God—who, by virtue of his intellectual and spiritual nature, can rise to any true and hearty belief of God, God in relation to man, therefore, is a different object for our thoughts

from God only in relation to nature. He has, no doubt, as we saw, put His mark unmistakeably upon the whole creation. But there is no reason or spirit in mere nature that can answer the thoughts and feelings of God with corresponding thoughts and feelings. Other beings may shew forth a Creator's glory, but in man there is a faculty to apprehend whence he has come, a faculty to rise above time and have converse with Eternity and with God. The Almighty Mind can so far mirror itself in the consciousness of man that we may have knowledge of Him, and of the relation existing between ourselves and Him. Nay, may we not say that man, as a spiritual being, is altogether imperfect so long as he is without God in the world, so long as the world is all, and God is nothing to him? Man seeks after God: there is an unsatisfied, painful "home-sickness" in him, that makes him restless, sick, almost unto death often, so long as he is without God. All remains dark and cold to him, and nature herself even keeps her brightest secrets veiled from him till he is able to rise to the thought, the consciousness of nature's God and ours. And it is a solemn thing, also, for us to think of, that the actual consciousness of Deity—the knowledge that He is, that we live and move and have our being in Him—exists only in us, of all worldly creatures, that the other creatures below us are all without that, that none of them are reading the witnesses for Him in the shining of the light or the roar of the thunder, in the blooming meadow or the pine clad hill, that there are none to whose reason or heart God can reveal Himself as a Being of Infinite Love and Holiness. "Day unto day uttereth speech" about Him who made us and whose we are, but it is only the human ear that can hear the voice, the human mind that can only read the lesson. "Night unto night teacheth knowledge," but we are the only pupils in night's sublime school that apprehend the knowledge that is taught. And because we, who can take in those solemn teachings, are thus different from other creatures, endowed with powers unknown to them, with longings and aspirations that are unfelt by them, with intellect and affection, with reason and will, we come to understand more about God from what we ourselves are than we can from all we see or know elsewhere. The idea we get of God from nature is imperfect: it is rather the idea of a Being of order and law, a Supreme Law of laws than of aught higher or more *loveable*. But amid the imperfections, even the corruptions of our own human nature we can discern traces of a Being who is endowed, only in Infinite, perfect measure with those nobler, better attributes we find within ourselves—of a God of unspeakable wisdom, of uncomprehensible Love. Infidelity may whisper, or may roar to us, that God is only an *anthropomorphic* imagination, the creation of the human reason: we feel in ourselves testimonies enough to the fact that man is a *theomorphic* creation, the product of Almighty Reason, the image of a Living God.

Just now it is principally with this question of man's creation—how man came here, that we have got to do. Man did not come here of himself; not by chance, not *merely* by any law, of the development or

any other sort. Whatever any development or other law may have done for him, it did not make a spiritual being of him. We are, however, to remember that he is marvellously related to other creatures, many of the races of which were here on the earth before he was, and looked as they could on the wonders of the world ere his eyes had opened on them. Through a long succession of unreckoned ages, the world had been getting prepared for man's entrance into it. We have all that mighty and majestic past, during which the Creator was here at work, ere man had raised his thinking head, or lived and reasoned in the earth as forming a large portion of our antecedents here—antecedents to which it would not become us to prove unfaithful. Strange types of being had risen and passed away and left nothing behind them save their rude and wonder-stirring remains, which the geologists are now so busy hewing out of the old rocks for us. But from the beginning, it seems that it was in the thought of the Creator in those, His goings forth from of old, even from everlasting, to form a nature liker unto His own. In the Divine idea—before the Divine Eye there was ever that higher creature—that monarch of the earth, that was to come as the true end of all creation. There was a time when no life was being lived here at all, when all was sullen, solemn death. And when races of living beings appeared on the scene, breathing and moving there—strange forms with some life in them, there was at first nothing like intelligence in them. Through long ages, in which now extinct fishes swam those primeval seas, and extinct reptiles crawled upon the ground, the world existed with no thought and no conscience in it. The world was still unfitted for any being like man: only in this modern age, when everything had been so ordered and prepared as to afford fitting scope for his high faculties, did this vicegerent of the Eternal step forth into being, able to think and discover and know in a way that none of the older creatures could do. In what way are we to explain *his* arrival upon the scene? Are we to look upon him only as a development of older and less perfect forms of being, a growth out of a monkey, a lineal descendant of some lizard or frog? Or are we, without troubling ourselves too much about laws of development and what not, to accept this as the one grand truth about man as a reasoning and spiritual being, that God made man in His own image—that in the likeness of God created He him.

We are not, however, to make the quarrel too wide between us and the propounders of one or another theory of development. If such teachers keep themselves to their own proper field, I am not sure that it is necessary that we should go out of our way to fasten any quarrel upon them at all. If they have taught us to look upon creation as a thing of order and not of confusion, we have abundant reason to be grateful to them. We may not be quite content with the law as they state it to us: we may imagine that, on the whole, we have reason to look upon the law as somewhat absurd; but they are quite right in teaching us that creation did not take place without law. The author of "*Vestiges of Creation*," for example, in expounding his law of de-

velopment, founds the whole upon two propositions which are, to say the least, exceedingly questionable:—first, that life is an effect of electric force, and secondly, that one creature, feeling its want of some other organ, not belonging to it, can, in process of time, produce another not in its own likeness, but according to its own instinctive feeling of want. The fish feels that it would be good to walk, and accordingly in due time it gets legs and other appurtenances and becomes a quadruped: or it fancies it would be good to fly, and after the requisite number of generations, the wings are forthcoming and you have the bird. Mr. Darwin's theory about the "origin of species" has the merit of being somewhat more philosophic. The "struggle for existence" is at least an admitted fact in the universe: whether it will serve as a foundation to bear the weight of that immense superstructure that he has sought to rear upon it, may still admit of question. That all from the beginning has gone on according to this law, which after all may turn out to be not so much a law as a breach of one, especially in reference to the human race—that it was some higher ape which, through sheer stress of weather, owing to that great struggle for existence, first took refuge in the then unknown port of humanity, and settled and begat sons and daughters there: we may be excused if we do not at once accept of that theory as all-sufficient. At the same time, if such theories concern themselves only with the physical nature of man, if they do not try to explain that which is spiritual in him, I do not think that, from a theological point of view, we have much to say to them. In fact, it may be rather an attractive thought that the whole creation of God is bound together with some such chain of connexion. It may do us good to think that things may have gone on by some such or by a still better law of development. I do not see that anybody need be the worse for believing in Mr. Darwin or the "Vestiges," if he don't just get too proud of his ancestors. But all that does not do away with the necessity of another, a spiritual creation in the case of man. Unless spirit also is a development of electricity, we shall believe that man, in this higher nature of his, is not the child of the monkey, or a descendant of the monad, but that he was in very truth, as the Holy Bible tells us, the son of God. At all events, I do not see, for my share, that there is the slightest occasion for us to go and fight off the doctrine of the creation of man against mere theories of development, as if the two things were utterly and absolutely irreconcilable.

There is another question, having reference, at once, to man's creation and to his relation unto other types or races of being which, even at the risk of being charged with intermeddling with matters with which we have not much business, we cannot well overlook. Science is beginning, in many quarters, rather loudly to hint that the Adam of whose creation we read in the first chapter of Genesis, was not by any means the first man, that the first man must have lived a great while before him. Some flint heads or things of that sort have been found in this or that deposit, they say, and a few bits of broken pottery have had

scientific eyes clapped on them somewhere else, which shew that there must have been men living here more than the bare orthodox 6,000 years ago. I do not know how sober science may decide satisfactorily to herself, such knotty questions. It is not unlikely that such supposed discoveries may turn out to be no discoveries at all. There is one thing, however, which we, who believe in the written book of revelation are not to forget, that intellect—mere thought—is *not* there represented as having begun on the earth along with Adam or with the human race, which is called the family of Adam—that race which has shewn its greatness in history, and wrought out such sublime purposes here—which above all has received into union with itself the Son of God. This race is, no doubt, represented as having begun with Adam. But there were beings who were able to do some thinking there, apparently, before he came—beings possessed of a larger or smaller share of the intelligence that has effloresced so marvellously in him, but wanting, probably, that higher moral or spiritual nature which specially constitutes him *man*. Whence came that intelligence that existed in the serpent, “subtlest beast of the field?” It does not help the matter, so far as the present question is concerned, to say that the devil *only spoke through* the serpent, though that may admit of question. For whence came the devil? He was there on the earth, not by any means a stranger there apparently, if that was actually he. Did he and his demons, beings of high intellect, but self-willed, rebellious, ungodly, not belong, originally, to the earth? Do we know of them as actually dwelling in any other world, planet or star than this one? Or again: whence that great fear on the mind of Cain after his terrible transgression, lest any one finding him, should slay him? His old father, his old mother, bowed down with unspeakable sorrow at the fearful tragedy that had been enacted in that primeval home, were, surely not so very terrible nor likely to imbrue their hands in the blood of their first-born, how grievous soever his sin might be. But there are other questions connected with this matter too deep and wide to be overtaken within our present limits. Let there be enough about that, therefore, for the present.

What we have further to consider to night is, what human nature, or rather the human creature,—for it is creature more than nature with which we are now concerned—has to tell us of that God in the image of whom man was made. We saw already, how Feuerbach explained the notions men form of divine attributes from what exists in themselves. There was only this wanting in Feuerbach's explanation, that man does not create such notions: he only, very imperfectly, sometimes even wrongly interprets the evidence his own being affords him of what God is *like*. For man is himself the best picture of what God is like, and if man were as he ought to be, as God designed him to be, the picture would be wholly trustworthy. And even now by sundering, from the idea of humanity all that is sinful, wrong, and false—by trying to lay hold of the idea of humanity, even as the cross of Christ above all other teaching, tells us to do: apart from its imperfections and unright-

tousnesses, we come to have some fitting though still dim representation of what God is. God mirrors himself in humanity as the sun does himself in the dew-drop or in the sparkling wave. We can thus picture to ourselves even the higher, the so-called incommunicable attributes of deity from what we are conscious of in ourselves. We can rise to the thought of an Infinite Eternal Being, because, though we are neither the one or the other, we can *think ourselves out* into unlimited space, into endless time. We are oppressed and circumscribed and "made subject to vanity" through the narrowness of worldly space and worldly time. We long to become victorious over these. These are the conditions of our being: we are not quite sure why, being in its highest estate, should be *conditioned* at all. The absolute Being must be above conditions of time or space, must live in an eternal *now*, and an infinite *here*. We ourselves long for communion with that which is without limit in space or in duration. Time with its changes hems us round, and soon this present time is to bring round for us that last great change of death; but through the heavy folds of the time-curtain, glimpses of eternity or eternal life reach us; we feel that there is an Eternal God, in whom the secrets of unconditioned and immortal life are contained, are *only half* concealed, and that for us also there is some heritage in eternity. Space, with its hard conditions, its gravitation or other laws, which we cannot subdue but must obey, which crush us under their heartless destiny-wheel if we oppose them;—space with its brooding mysteries oppresses us, and out of its narrow boundaries we wonder whether there be no escape for us into something diviner, more infinite. We accept none of those conditions as final, ultimate. We feel after, we learn to worship one who is unlimited, everlasting; and as we feel within us the growing sense of fellowship with Him, our souls expand into a gladsomer liberty, the spirit of time does not oppress us as before, we begin to distinguish afar off an eternal home, with a Heavenly Father.

And then, we have a sense of righteousness in us, a feeling after what is just and true, a feeling that is apt to grow all the more painful the further we go from righteousness. Iniquity is not the thing that can accomplish the noblest results. It is an evil, and once done is apt to find us out again, even when we most seek to escape it. Follows us with slow but certain foot and rises on the sinner as a thing of vengeance, damnation, and woe, when he dreams he has left it far behind. And the conscience tells that that is only just and right, that it is not by chance that righteousness *puts us right*, that unrighteousness necessarily puts us wrong. The human spirit stands in immediate relation with righteousness and sin, as no other creature does on earth. And the world is a school for the conscience as well as for the intellect, and everything is driving us to the conclusion that verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth. When men sow to the flesh, put into the soil of their lives any sort of damnable seed of iniquity, they are sure to find that it is an actual seed they have been dealing with that has a faculty for growth in it, that nothing can keep it from ripening into a harvest of

judgments and misery which they themselves, however unwillingly, must reap in due time, they and not others for them. The man who has told lies to his neighbour and got rich, may-be, by that evil plan, may have to find out to his cost that a little truth is worth a world of money, that ill-gotten money is apt to get into a bag with holes, or at all events that living in or by a lie is sure to bring some kind of ruin in time. A young man goes sowing certain wild oats or whatever the fashionable name for them is, and has plenty of teachers to tell him that *that* is just right for him, what others do, what is only natural for youth;—sets about gathering the hellish rose-buds of lust and passion, goes perhaps into drunkenness, and alas whoredom, as quite allowable things, and imagines that all is still to continue well with him, and he finds bye-and-bye that things will not go right on any such terms, that such devils'-chains are not to be broken just at his bidding. And even if they don't bring utter ruin and death to him, as they do to many, if he wakes at last a sobered man and seeks to shed the filthy slough of youthful sin and get altogether quit of it, he has to learn that that is not permissible here. In an impaired constitution, a heart grown consciously cold to what is best and noblest, the distrust of those who are dear to him;—in a home on whose domestic comforts there rests still that one "damned spot" that will *not* out, for all the snow-water in the world, and vain attempts to make it never so clean, in sickly children, or in the gloomy shadows of premature death, his sin keeps finding him out: the judgments of God, whether he has learnt to call them by that name or no, do not fail to overtake him. The offence, of whatever sort, is scored in the chancery of heaven; the debt has been contracted and the bill will not fail to present itself when it is due. When a man may have been trying hard to forget all, when he thinks himself secure from it at last, then the iniquity of his heels in running away from it doth compass him about, he must meet and answer the just account. These are not fancy pictures; you may find the original of them in the world any day. When the sinner has made his bed, he must perforce lie on it. As he has brewed, so must he drink, even to the loathsome dregs. As he has sowed so must he reap. These are laws of the moral world, and we as moral beings are able to understand them, to recognize the justice of them. And there arises in us the consciousness of a moral God, judging righteous judgments in the earth, of an infinitely just God, who can have no dealings, except in the way of judgment with iniquity, who has a supreme interest in chasing iniquity out of the world. It is right, all this:—our consciences testify to us its rightness. The man who has erred, if there be any spiritual wisdom or insight in him, will accept of the punishment of his error as the fair and fitting thing for him, the only way in which he and his ways can be rectified. The Judge of the earth is doing right with him, and why should he complain? Yes my friends! these things—a thousand things like these are warning us that it is a Being of unlimited righteousness, of absolute morality with whom we have to do; that however things are wrong or going

wrong, He will bring things right in the world,—that however justice and right may be put down and iniquity and wrong may reign, and things in general may look as if it were a devil who was reigning here, we know in the inmost souls of us that things are not to continue so, that behind all the evil and distressing *appearances* of the world, there is a moral and righteous Governor of the world, ever out of evil bringing forth good, out of wrong bringing right, out of death and sin ever producing life and holiness.

And so, further : there is that about us which furnishes us with a faint image of a God of Infinite Love. We have affections that bind us to our fellow-men, that enable us to make their ease and cares our own. From the time we enter the world we are surrounded by a net-work of tender feeling and sympathy, that teaches us that we are not here of and for ourselves, that we are bound to others by ties that we may not break without having to pay the penalty. Here, as the tender infant, on the very threshold of life, opens his eyes on the light of the world, a parent's love receives the helpless babe, and welcomes the marvellous stranger with a world of fondness into this untried existence, and cares so affectionately for one who, as yet, can shew no answering regard. And love accompanies us upon all the way by which we have to come. And we, too, come to love those who are connected, by some careful providence, with ourselves, father or mother, brother or sister, wife or child. These affections tell us that He who made us is One also who can love, not imperfectly, not selfishly, not slightly as we may do, but with a love that has no limit and no withholding. That which imperfectly exists in us must exist in its purity and perfectness in Him who sent us here. These feelings in us are the faint images of what is in Him. He cares for us as a father for his child, only with no defect and no evil in His love. Even heathens in their darkness, have told us of an All-Father—a Father of us all—have felt the witness stirring within them to a Being of perfect sympathy and compassion, who had not left them to themselves, who was anxiously caring for them, watching over them. Man has always found it difficult to lose the sense of a Divine Fatherhood: and still more, in the Fullness of times, in the revelation of His Son, God has taken care that that feeling should not be lost. In this respect, the revelation that has been given us confirms the dim and lonely cravings of the human soul. All love here may prove itself a delusion and a snare. We may be disappointed in it: it may become a source of infinite grief to us. The object of our affection may be taken from us and we may seek among the things around us for the beloved one all in vain; or he may grow altogether cold to us. We want to know One whose love cannot change or grow cold or be taken from us. And what we cannot find in the things or persons that are seen and temporal, we find in the God we worship. The heart opens itself to the sense of this all-embracing Love, as the flower does to the sun-light; and thus it becomes eased of most of its life's burden, freed from the painfullest part of its loneliness and weariness. And when life

itself grows cheerless and vacant, and there is no one to give us consolation, and there is no love of man, however warm, that can reach down to us in the depths of our misery—when the soul, amid all that is dim and doubtful and distressing, is still able to discern that there is One above who helps to bear our burden, who can come down to us in the deepest, blackest depths of our distress, and cause us to feel the touch of His Fatherly hand there, ah! it is no longer with us as it was. Life is no longer so blank and dreadful. We know of a Father in Heaven; we are conscious of His care; we feel that, as we cry up to Him out of our lonely places, He hears us, and it is His favor that is round us, as a shield, and we are no longer in despondency or dismay. And when Death, at last, with cold and frosty hand, knocks, a grim ungainly visitant at our gates—bids us arise and follow him into the unseen; when we have laid off the garments that we are to put on no more, and done the last piece of labor here, and risen from the chair that we are to fill no more, and closed the book we are to open no more; when wearied and worn out with life's conflict, we turn our faces to the wall and prepare to give up the ghost, then if we have the assurance that out of all distress and gloom, the narrowness and pain of time, we are to emerge into the light of a Heavenly Father's face, and that His image which has been marred by sin, and dimmed by too close fellowship with things that are of this world is to be restored in us to perfect clearness—that the shadows are passing away and all now is to be perfect day with us: then death itself loses all its terror for us, and grows big with Eternal Life—a life which, existing here as in the narrowness of a mother's womb, is to be born in that hour of pain. But to reach such high assurance, we still need something more than our merely Adamic nature can give us. We need to know humanity, not as it is in Adam but as it is in Christ, in whom our humanity has become more perfect and glorious—we need to be able to look upon life, not as in connexion with our first parent, who lost his eternal life and became the slave of time and died, but as it is in Him who has brought life and immortality to light by His gospel, who has become the author of Eternal Life to all who obey Him. We must learn to look upon this tree of our humanity, not as dead and withered in Adam, but as it has burst forth into new life, beauty, and fruit in the second Adam—the Lord from Heaven. But that is what we cannot enter upon to-night—what must remain for our next lecture. May God, meanwhile, bless to us what has been said, and make it profitable to us in our thoughts, in our lives, and in our conversation.—AMEN.

LECTURE IV.

THE GOD-MAN: THEANTHROPOLOGY.

JOHN I. 14:—"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

IF you believe Dr. Shauss, and a few other modern teachers, you will attach not the slightest importance to words like those which I have read. You will have to make up your minds that everything supernatural is to be very carefully eliminated from all you read in the gospels about the person and life of Jesus Christ. You will, especially, have to regard the writer of these four gospels with his notions of the Eternal pre-existence of the Lord, and what not, as an object of the very highest suspicion, and to keep your critical detectives very carefully on the watch to see that his contraband articles, with which he has been beguiling the credulity of 18, or perhaps only of 17 centuries, don't be accepted as genuine articles of faith any more. All that "life of Jesus," in fact, the bare narration of which has made so many thousands of other lives more tolerable for so many ages, has all turned, in the hands of Dr. Shauss and such very questionable teachers, into foolish Hebrew myth, and moonshine. The earliest disciples of Jesus were no better than superstitious fools, fanatical fishermen, ready to believe any sort of unbelievable thing, and in their unscientific wrong-headedness, actually to go and preach their vain notions as eternal truth. If we find in this fourth gospel more philosophic ideas, it is simply because some man, a good hundred years probably after the first disciples were safe in their grave, tried to mix up a number of speculations borrowed from the Platonic philosophy, or other such quarters, with the altogether incredible stories that had got into vogue about Jesus as "the Christ," and then came before the world under the assumed name of the Apostle John. I shall have more to say to you of those matters in a future lecture; meanwhile, it is just enough to warn you of what things are actually being taught, in reference to Him whom we look up to as the founder of our faith, as the author of Eternal Life!

I spoke to you, in a former lecture, of the revelation God had been pleased to make of Himself and His will by means of a written word; I am going to speak to you now of the higher, more unspeakable, revelation

He has made of Himself in the person of a living man,—God manifest in the flesh. The dead word, the bare letter of which does not give life, but may even bring death to us,—that is to be found in the pages of a printed book : the Living, Eternal Word, who is with God and who is God, could appear only in the form of living humanity, wearing human flesh, capable of understanding, of feeling human grief and pain. If it is not an incredible or improbable thing that God should have spoken to us by a Book, outwardly just like other books, it is surely not less credible that He should have revealed Himself in a Man, outwardly just like other men. And if the written record is precious to us as an exhibition of God's will, a Divine guide to us upon our life's path, how much more does the life of the Lord stand out from all other lives as the true and living Word, in which we learn lessons that set us above the confusion and darkness of time, in which we read for ourselves the secret of Life Everlasting? It may, no doubt, seem strange that God, a Divine Person, should in any sense become flesh, should not merely put it on as a garment to be worn for a while with more or less inconvenience to Deity, but should actually unite himself to it in an eternal unity of person. And objectors seem to think themselves rather strong upon this point, and fight hard enough to drive us out of this confidence as altogether absurd and vain. It seems quite an impossible thing in the eyes of sceptical reason. Reason, in the person of its unbelieving votaries, goes blinking round this bulwark of the Christian faith, sees it bristling all round with difficulties that it cannot overcome, contradictions that it cannot reconcile ; and seems to think it has overcome it when it has only denied it, and when they have begun to treat it as a fond and foolish myth and cunningly devised fable, good enough for the simple, pious souls of some olden time, who did not know any better, but quite unsuited to us in such wise days as these. "Incarnation!"—it says to us,—“a Divine Word, a Son of God becoming flesh! Oh, of course! we know pretty well by this time what that means ; how much significance we are to attach to that. There have been few religions in the world that have not had something to tell us of some God or Son of God coming down in bodily form among men. In Indian mythologies, Greek mythologies, Hebrew mythologies, it is still the same. The name may change ; it may be Vishnu, or Apollo, or Christ, but it is the same thing nevertheless. At some critical time or another, when man's trust in himself was getting low, he has only been too ready to grasp at the notion that some Deity had come down to help him in his extremities. And, no doubt, the myth may have a certain meaning and beauty. Those old, irrational beliefs teach us lessons, doubtless ; lessons, however, very different from those which you, with your foolish orthodoxy, are deafening us with. We learn from them to recognize the fact that every man is more or less a Divine Incarnation, a Son of God. And those are the truly great and heroic ones who, in any age or under whatever name, have realized that fact most clearly. Moses, Confucius, Mohammed, Odin, Plato, Jesus ;—what matters it what country had the bearing of them, or what dialect they spoke, or what name they bore,—they were divine men, heroes all of them, and we worship them

accordingly. Great and marvellous surely among sons of men was the Son of Mary ; one whose teaching and example have raised life out of its commonness, and brought light upon the low, dark places of life and the soul. Him, as One of the great ones of the earth—as chief of the great ones, if you like—we delight to honour. But it is only confusing matters for us, landing us in a thousand vain and contradictory speculations, to bid us believe that the Godhead—the whole of God—was actually dwelling in the body of the Man Christ Jesus.” And a deal more to the same effect, which I, tired enough already of trying to speak in this Emersonian (or whatever it is) dialect, will now prefer to omit. For, indeed, in those who are trying to teach us after that fashion, and who give themselves credit, not altogether without reason (let it be granted them), for a large amount of earnestness, there is so much that is superficial, inane, and shadowy, that the mind can find no rest for itself, no confidence or consolation such as the poor, and the weary, and the desolate are sighing after. This plan of throwing all the great ones of the earth into a heap, and then putting Jesus on the top of all as the sort of culminating point of divine consciousness in humanity, the one who got higher up at that business than any other did, can surely go but a little way towards explaining the solemn and sublime mysteries of His life and death. There is so much that is essential about Him that must be utterly ignored on any such theorizing plan as this ; His history must get so entirely written over again, and everything so misrepresented or explained away to form quite a new fancy picture of Him that will suit modern men, that one is obliged to give up all such attempts as quite hopelessly untrue, and to turn away after all to see whether the old gospel-picture of “the Lord” be not infinitely better than this wretched modern caricature. Does not the plain gospel record possess rather more reason, and an infinite deal more of consolation, than all Straussian or other critical talk as to what the “life of Jesus” must have been so as to suit the science of this age ?

I told you before that in these lectures it is my object to approach our subjects not so much from the theological side as from that which lies nearer to our ordinary lives, and thoughts, and feelings. We do not start here, therefore, from the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, as in a systematic exposition of Christian theology we might have to do. At present, that doctrine lies before us rather as a *terminus ad quem*, the goal to which our meditations may ultimately lead us, than as the *terminus a quo*, the point at which we are to begin. This, however, is a plan which, for the most part, does not meet the approval of modern objectors. They must have this question of the Trinity all settled first. If they throw us out there, they fancy we can have nothing further to say about any incarnation, any “God manifest in the flesh.” That, therefore, for the first thing, is to be voted by them an impossibility, an absurd contradiction in terms, and then all you have to say about an Incarnate God or Son of God can be summarily thrown out of court, as having no case to present there. A Trinity of persons in One God is, they tell us, a wholly incredible thing. Three are not one, one is not three ; and other such small

bits of arithmetical doctrine which, it is to be hoped, will prove edifying to those who duly meditate them, but which seem very dishonest trespassers upon a territory that does not the least belong to them. We do not need here to enter upon the consideration, *in limine*, of this transcendent mystery. We can leave that alone meanwhile, only observing that no man is justified in supposing that this is a mere question of arithmetic, to be settled by any principle of numeration ; that there are deeper and more unspeakable mysteries lying involved in this matter than any arithmetical ones. And if I say further, that this matter lies beyond the range of human reason, I am only saying that the reason is limited and does not comprehend all truth in itself,—that, just as you need not ask the eye, however good its seeing power may be, to decide the question whether there are inhabitants in any of the heavenly bodies, so it is of no use asking the reason to declare to you all the mysteries of the Divine nature and essence. And for the rest, if there is any convenient mud heap into which we can toss this dishonest and rather effete talk of three not one, one not three, and so forth, we shall prefer getting quit of it on the most summary terms as being altogether irrelevant and on the whole, in more senses than one, rather impertinent.

It is not, therefore, you will observe, so much of a principle as of a person that I am now to speak to you. I am not to unfold merely a doctrine, still less a mere tenet or opinion, but to seek to exhibit a living Being—Jesus of Nazareth ;—what He was, in eternity or in time, and what He evermore continues to be ; for what purpose or in what capacity He came into the world ; in what respects He was like other men, in what respects he may have differed from other men ; whether along with all that was purely human in Him there was not that which was more than human ; whether He was not at once the highest type of right humanity and “ God manifest in the flesh ; ” questions like these are now to form, for the remainder of this lecture, the subject for our consideration. Let us begin with the manhood of Jesus, and from that go on to enquire in what respects it was a *God-manhood* that dwelt in Him.

1. One good service which modern scepticism or even infidelity has probably helped to do for us has been to drive us, more than we might have gone without such pressure, to the contemplation of the humanity of Jesus Christ. That I take to be no slight service, by whomsoever done ; and if the enquiries started by modern thinkers, however painful some of them may have been, have helped the least to make us feel how very much this truth, which was in danger of becoming nothing more than a dead, cold formula in our minds, was a thing of altogether vital moment to us ; if they have aided us to feeling, more than ever before, that Jesus of Nazareth was One made like unto ourselves, though without sin, we cannot be too thankful that God, by any means, should have led us to such a result. For there is doubtless often a tendency among orthodox Christians to overlook or to think lightly of the real manhood of Christ, and to pass it by without attaching any very special meaning to it. It is allowed to fall into the back ground, and believing men cease to look upon it as a ground of encouragement or consolation. We are rather averse to

think of the Lord as compassed about with human wants, as sharing in human feelings, as thinking human thoughts. We raise Him up altogether above the level of humanity into some dim, atmospheric, ethereal region, where He no doubt remains as the source of all blessing to us, but from which it is difficult to think of Him as condescending to any sympathy with our weaknesses and fears, where all is vague and indistinct about him ; and we miss the beating of the loving heart, the pressure of the friendly hand. We forget to think of Him as one who has fought the same oppressive battle of life that we have to fight ; who has set Himself in the very brunt of the battle, where the strokes were fiercest and the hostility most unsparing ; where trial was the most terrible, and suffering the most painful. We forget what of life's griefs and woes He had to bear ; how He ate the bread of affliction, and drank the water of affliction ; and did a deal of mean, hard work without any murmur, since it had been all appointed so, and never turned away from any of life's sorrow, merely because it was sorrowful, nor tried to shuffle off any portion of life's burden merely because it was so heavy. Even when we think of the marvellous death He suffered for us, we are apt to pass over all that was more strictly human about it, the thirst, the loneliness, the pain, and to look only upon what was more than human about the events of the cross. We are apt to think of Him as the glorified, the risen Lord, and to forget all that it cost Him to become that for us. His toils, and weariness, and woe ; the narrowness and ills of poverty ; His hard work ; His loneliness ; His endurance of the proud world's rebuke, and all that learning of obedience by the things that He suffered, are allowed to fall into the back ground or to assume a hazy, unlikelike aspect in our eyes ; and we think far too little of all about Him that stamped him a brother born for adversity. And we ought to be thankful if we are led by any process, however unwelcome, to turn our thoughts again in this direction, and to realise to ourselves more distinctly what we mean when we speak of "the *Man* Christ Jesus." For so inveterate has grown the habit, in certain quarters of otherwise orthodox churches, of looking away from all that is truly human about the Christ, that we find, in these days, the ghost of an old heresy creeping forth from its ancient grave here and there, and declaring, in such words as this modern century can help it to the use of, that in no true or perfect sense was Christ possessed of humanity at all. He wore a human body, of course. The Son of God having some business to do on earth which He could not well get transacted in any other way, was pleased to encumber Himself with these garments of human flesh and blood, and to animate a human frame. But the soul and spirit of man were not there. All of mind that dwelt in that tabernacle of flesh was, not human, but Divine Mind. Deity had furnished all that was immaterial there ; all that humanity had to do was to supply the bare outside shell, in which, for want of any better medium, God would manifest Himself, and deliver His doctrine, and do His mighty deeds among men ! Which way of looking at the person of Jesus Christ ought surely to strike any intelligent Christian man only dumb with astonishment. It makes a simple monster of the

Lord. On any such supposition, He is of course not properly man at all, for no one can imagine that it is only flesh and blood, bones and skin that constitute us *men*. It is even rather difficult to see how, when you assign to Deity the bare purpose of animating otherwise dead matter, you can preserve all Divine attributes intact. One can hardly discover how the Lord could be either true man or "very God" on any such supposition. There is certainly no essential personal union of Godhead and manhood possible on such terms, but only the most miserable mockery of such a union. The body of Jesus Christ would then have to be regarded as a mere cheat, looking like man, but not man; a living lie, in fact, with this additional blasphemy, that it would be God Himself who would be telling the lie. That, to my thinking, is one of the most hateful of all still extant heresies, and to be looked upon as of the "damnable" sort rather than not. There are good and earnest men and ministers preaching this incredible doctrine, they say, in different parts of Christendom. It is all the more pity for their goodness and earnestness. It is rather difficult to see how any sound, healthy Christianity can be possible under such conditions.

No, friends, it was a real man, with human body, soul, and spirit, who was born on that night of all nights in Bethlehem; One who came in human nature to take this human life just as He found it, to bear all its burden, to suffer all its ills, to meet all its temptations. It was a true man, and not a mere *make-believe*, who learnt wisdom, and hard work as well, yonder in the Hebrew village; who fought the Devil in the wilderness and elsewhere; who wept tears of natural sorrow over a friend, a brother departed beside the rocky tomb of Bethany; whose *soul* was so exceeding sorrowful even unto death in that hour and power of darkness in the garden; who made of His soul an offering for the sins of many as He hung upon the tree. The whole narrative of His life and death becomes mere helpless confusion, if we forget and overlook the true and *complete* humanity of the Lord. It was this poor feeble nature of ours that He took up, in His person, into eternal union with the nature of God. Our theanthropology—our doctrine of the God-man—would be nothing short of absurd, if we are to start with wrong notions here. And if we believe in Him as our only Lord, as our Divine Saviour, does not this add quite a marvellous element in our peace and blessedness, that we have in Him One whose human heart is touched with a fellow-feeling of our human infirmities; One who *was* in all points tempted like as we are, and who, having vanquished all temptation Himself, is able at once to sympathize with and to succour us in all our temptations. We know He feels for us, even as the most loving heart on earth can feel for another in distress or trouble, only with a love infinitely purer and more perfect. And amid all our warfare and fierce conflict with sin or with sorrow, we have ever His life as an example to us, as our guide to victory. For He has fought just with our weapons, and left humanity victorious over every foe, and bequeathed that triumphant humanity as an heritage and sacred possession to all the faithful. He too came into the world with a will that was altogether

free, that *could* be assailed by the great Tempter, as ours must be assailed by him, that could at once be perfectly free and perfectly godly. As we look back now on that life of the Lord, as it was once lived here among men, and in the midst of all powers of evil, this is what is taught us therein: 'you are not to regard yourselves as hopelessly bound over to be natural slaves and bondmen of the Devil and of ungodliness. Your poverty and want don't need to bind you under any power of sin, for, see! I too have been poor and have had to suffer the ills of penury, and might have escaped from all that if I had done the Devil's will, but preferred bearing it all in order that I might do the Father's will. All your hardships, griefs, and oppressions don't make you *necessarily* evil, for I, a brother man, have endured all these and kept this manhood pure and spotless in spite of all. Death even, with its sad, dread mystery, need not terrify nor alarm you, for I have gone down into Death, have fought with that last foe and robbed him of his sting. Life with all its distresses, and death with all its terrors have led Me on to Immortality, Eternal Life, and—they may lead *you*. If the Devil threatens you, if the world oppresses you, if sorrows, thick and awful, surround you, you know that all these things have also been felt by Me; and as I have overcome, it is My desire regarding you that you should have the victory too! For Jesus, so far as His own freedom of will was concerned, *might* have stricken hands with the Tempter;—and resisted him, not from a natural impossibility to comply with his suggestions, but through His own fixed resolution in all things to do *right*, according to the will of the Father. He was poor, and had riches offered Him; despised, and might have attained to honour. He might have made such a bargain with the Tempter as to have astonished all the world. But He could allow no shadow to stain the fair surface of His humanity; He could, for no consideration in the world, have aught to do with any, the smallest, evil. Temptations, in the wilderness or elsewhere, were there, not for the purpose of being yielded to, but to be overcome. That was the one thing He had got to do with *them*. And that struggling but victorious humanity of the Lord warns us that that is just what we have got to do with them too. Christ has shown us by His life that this human nature, in its right estate, is meant to be victorious at last over all sin and over all that is of the Devil, that the God who has sent His only Begotten Son to become a man like unto us does not mean that we, if our lives get rightly ordered, are for ever to remain under the power of the Devil or of any power of wickedness at all. The way to victory stands open to us: our Captain has gone up on the way before us. "Say, who follows in His train?"

Here, therefore, we have ground in common—we and the objectors to the higher, the *theanthropological* view of Christ's person. Jesus, true and complete man,—not the mere semblance, but the living reality of manhood;—we have that as a fact more or less highly valued by all of us. And that surely is no slight thing. Let us more and more hold fast by that;—let us seek more and more to understand what that means for us. But now another question presents itself which we have

sincere of heart, they may have discovered in Jesus what the life of no other man has disclosed to them, and overlooking all such inconsistencies as those we have seen, may be rejoicing in a humanity perfected in Him, having nevertheless the gravest doubts of His Divine nature. For their sakes, I feel that it is rather hard that I have had to use such words as I have about the Lord if we look upon Him as man and nothing more. I don't know that I would have spoken them, if the like of them were not being used elsewhere, if they were not being declared as the only right conclusion to come to about the Lord by men that have forsaken the doctrine of Christ's Divinity, and if I had not felt that there is really no other logical conclusion left for us to come to, if He is not God as well as man. If the old, orthodox church creeds about Him are wrong, it is His own words that have put them wrong, that have begotten a system of imposture that is none the more worthy of reverence because it has lasted eighteen hundred years. That is the hopeless abyss into which all belief in Jesus except as the God-man, must ultimately descend,—from whose darkness there is no escape save in the literal adoption of the truth declared in our text, that the Eternal Word—the Divine Person who was in the beginning with God and who was God, was, in the fulness of times made flesh and dwelt among men, and manifested a glory which was as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And if that is our only alternative, we shall let it lie there. I hope no one here is expecting me to spend any breath in proving that Jesus Christ was not a liar or a blasphemer, a swindler and a cheat. I trust I have other work for myself here than to enter upon any such controversy. It will be a long while, I trust, before I need to say anything to prove that those bloodthirsty Jews were doing a very unrighteous thing when they shouted out in the sight of the sun, "away with this man; give us Barabbas, any robber or murderer you like rather than this one: crucify, crucify Him."

2. But let us now look upon the higher, the *theanthropological* aspect of Christ's Person, and see what is to be made of the *Divine* nature of the Lord. We have seen that the notion of His being a mere man involves the inference of His being a false, deceitful, blasphemous man; let us see whether the doctrine of His being God as well as man be reconcilable with the fact of His being a *true* and a perfect man. The Incarnation of the Son of God is undoubtedly the central truth of the Christian faith. You will observe that this is a very different thing from the mythical incarnations of heathen religions. Yet, viewed in connection with the coming of our Lord in the flesh, those fabled incarnations receive a new meaning and value. They teach us at least that the idea of an Incarnate Deity,—of a God or Son of God manifest in the flesh is not inconsistent with the general reason of humanity,—is one that commends itself to the distressed and desolate minds of suffering men and women in the world in all ages and countries; one fitted to give relief and consolation to the most darkened minds everywhere and always. The impression has been universal that man cannot help or guide himself aright, that there are oppressions from which he

cannot free himself, that there is a great world of dark all round him, for which he needs more than bare human light. Poor heathen idolaters have felt thus in their needs: the conscience of man, we may conclude, has a tendency to feel thus. And may we not imagine that that of which the poor Pagan dreamt, of which he got dim and distant glimpses amid all his darkness, may have all come true in Jesus of Nazareth? *Must* we not believe that there is a great truth declared in this prevailing impression of a Divine Incarnation, and that the perfect realization of that truth has been reached in the Lord Jesus Christ? At all events, you are to see that there is nothing at all repugnant to the universal conscience of humanity in a sort of belief that has always been so prevalent. Whatever the proud, vainglorious reason of some of our nineteenth century thinkers may have got to say to it, men have always looked to an incarnation of Deity as the one great means of salvation for them. The common belief has been: "we cannot help ourselves: God must help us. Deliverance out of all our doubts and distresses, from all our sins and sorrows, has grown impossible for us by any power of our own; we need to have Deity itself revealed among us,—need God Himself to come down and teach us and bring us up out of the misery and narrowness and sinfulness of these lives of ours." That is virtually what man has been saying in the most various dialects and forms from the very dawn of humanity. And hence Christ is in fact, as He is called, "the Desire of all nations." Men had been always longing for some one like Him,—some one who could bring God and them nearer to one another. They wanted to know something of God: they did not know how that could be if God did not in some way come down and reveal Himself to them. Was it any wonder that, in those early days of the faith, there were so many—Jews and Gentiles—who hailed the truth regarding Immanuel as their very life and salvation?

And to men who are still burdened and held down by all the ills and vexations of life, it is not apt to seem so surprising that God should have become "One with us." It is just the great want, I think, of the human soul amid all its sorrows and trouble, facing the solemn mysteries of life and death, to know that God is united to man. Any Pantheistic moonshine will be welcome to many, rather than be driven to feel that God is, by any great, impassable gulf separated from us. An immanent God, dwelling in us, of whom we ourselves are incarnations, presents attractions to many minds, which may feel themselves rather repelled by the bare thought of a Transcendant, Absolute, Self-existent God, dwelling in some light unspeakable that is altogether inaccessible for us. 'What interest can such an Absolute Being have in us? He cannot come down to our level, cannot share our sorrows or be moved to any sympathy by the thought of our distress. Such a God may do for angels, probably, who may be admitted to some participation of His glory. Is He at all such an One as I can approach to with any confidence or hope? He can surely have little feeling for my frailty: what tenderness can He have for me in my sin? It does not help me much in fighting this fight of life, or in doing all my work, in bearing all life's ills, to think of Him as so infinitely

above me. I long for help from above, but how can I think that He will care to give me help? Ah! Have you not felt even thus? In lonely and desolate hours, when the world had not strength to aid, nor comfort wherewith to cheer you, and the vexed heart felt like water all spilt upon the ground that cannot be gathered again, did not the soul naturally turn to some One above, and was it not your one hope that He might be ready to interest Himself in your cares and sorrows? You wanted to have Him coming near you, to know that there was that in His heart that answered to what was in yours.

Well: surely there is nothing that can give us such assurance that God has an interest in us, in humanity in general, and in all that is human in us or others, as the fact of an Incarnation. If that were possible, and who is to say that it is impossible, what else could shew us so clearly that it is God's object to deliver us from our misery and from our sin? And our wants—the wants of human nature—are so great, so unspeakable, when we begin to look at them, that we cannot see how God could have helped us as we needed help, in any other way. We wanted to know God; it was a dreary thing to have to live without knowing Him who sent us hither, and His will about us when we are here. We could know so very little either about our origin or about our destiny. We needed deliverance; such as man could not give us, such as, we were sure, God *could* give us. And “unquiet ever is the heart,—as saith St. Augustine,—until it rests in God.” Ignorant and dark is the soul, until it knows God. Sinful and vain is the soul, until God puts it right. But then, if we are ever to know God, it must be God who reveals Himself to us. We cannot ourselves enter in behind the veil that conceals the Infinite, the Undiscoverable, nor by all our searching, find out God. He must come down to us in such a way as to have fellowship with us, seeing we cannot rise up to fellowship with Him. He must become One with us, before we can hope to become One with Him. But how is that possible, except by an Incarnation? Your theology therefore is of no use to you, unless it is also a *theanthropology*. For it is not merely an Absolute, it is far rather a Self-revealing God whom we need and whom we seek to know. - We needed, in fact, to have Him coming down to take our humanity with all its feebleness and weariness, all its wants and troubles, into union with Himself. We could not ascend unto Him; if the great gulf between us was to be spanned, it must be from His side, not from ours. And in Jesus Christ we see all this effected. God in Him *has* taken up our nature into his own. There is nothing that need separate us from Him: He Himself has removed all separation. Our weakness and imperfection, our toil and pain, our sin and guilt have not kept Him from assuming our nature, from having all our griefs laid upon Him. Human nature has thus been sanctified, glorified. Sunk and lost, ruined and helpless,—He nevertheless has apprehended it, saved it, made of it a new, a holy, a Divine thing. He has claimed this world as His own, destined to become a kingdom of God. He has claimed this human life as His own, and has made of it, first in Himself and then in all the faithful, an Eternal Life. And thus, as knowing God in Christ, we too have a new light upon all

our way, a new life beating in our hearts. Ills may oppress us as before, and life's cup may still taste bitter. But through all that is seen and temporal, we are able to know God as our friend and guide, to know that He can follow us, can go with us, into our deepest, darkest depths of trouble, seeing He has personally made Himself acquainted with far worse than that,—to know that, whether it be perplexity or whether it be pain, He can feel for us and help us, for He Himself has learnt the whole extent of human weakness and of human woe.

But we have still a few words left us to say of that person of the Godhead who was made flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. I have not said much, except in a few words, cursorily, at the beginning of this discourse, of any separation of persons in the Godhead. That, however, is a thing that cannot be overlooked by us; we are now arrived at the point at which we can look at it for a few moments. He who is declared, in our text, to have been made flesh, is the "Word of God." And that this was an actual, Living Person, and not some bare attribute of Deity is clear from what St. John had said before. He was with God from the beginning: He was God. It was by Him that the worlds had been made. He was the living Light shining in darkness. He was the Life of men. He was in the world that He had made, but the world knew Him not. He was giving power, to all who received Him, to become Sons of God. He Himself is always called "*The Son of God.*" Elsewhere He speaks of Himself as the Son whom the Father has sent, who had come to do the Father's will. He is called the Only Begotten of the Father. And that means, surely, that He is wholly of the same nature, that is, of Divine, Infinite, Eternal nature. All in fact, that is said of the Father is also said of Him. What Fatherhood and Sonship mean in Deity we can, of course, but dimly know. Eternal Sonship may denote some *generic* inferiority, it undoubtedly does signify entire essential equality in all power and glory. And how there should be Father and Son, with the Blessed Spirit, when God is acknowledged to be One is a mystery which we are, fortunately, not called upon to explain. We cannot enter upon such matters at any length here. I have only to say that there can be nothing to make it impossible—nothing even that can shew it to be unreasonable that the principle of Fatherhood should be represented in Godhead as well as in humanity, that the Paternal and Filial relation should exist there as well as here. Nay, even on grounds of reason, may we not have cause to believe that it is even so. God is acknowledged to be, in the truest sense, a Father now. But that is not in Him a merely temporal relation, a thing that at some moment of time began to be. In Him it must denote something Eternal, that had no beginning at all, that has been in some unspeakable manner, existing from all Eternity in Him. It has some foundation in His own *essential* character. It is not a thing of time, called into existence by persons, objects existing only in time, and subject to the conditions and mutations of time. And, therefore, there must have been an Eternal object for it. There can be no Eternal, unbeginning Fatherhood without involving also Eternal Sonship—no Eternal Father, therefore, without also an Eternal Son.

And see, further, what a higher, sublimer view this gives us of God's relation to us, if we also know Him as our Heavenly Father. There was an Eternal Son of God existing before all worlds, by whom all worlds were made, who has ever occupied this relation unto the Father so that He might be able to bring many sons and daughters into the family of God. Fatherhood is no new thing with the Almighty. It is not an unessential thing which He can do without, and still be God. And Sonship is not an unessential thing in Godhead either, for God must *be* Son as well as Father. But the Son was not Son for Himself alone; He represents in Himself all Sonship unto God. This relation which we also are called upon to share with Him, lies all eternally secure in Him. Allfatherhood, as we know it on the earth, has been testifying to us of what God eternally has been, of what God eternally will be. And now are we too called to this heritage of adoption. In Jesus Christ we are called upon to learn to look up to the Almighty God as our Father indeed. It is no figure of speech. It is not a bare synonym for Divine beneficence. It is the essential thing about God, of which His kindness, beneficence, love are only expressions. And God has revealed Himself as a Father to us, revealed Himself, as a Divine Father *alone* could do, by sending His Son to us. He has done that that we, too, might come to be children and heirs of God.

And thus too, you will perceive, the question about the different persons of the Godhead ceases to be an arithmetical one. There are questions of deepest, awfulest moment involved in it with which arithmetic certainly has nothing to do. When we begin so far to forget ourselves as to say there is only One God, and yet there are three Gods, or that there are three Persons and still only one Person, then we may have to be put right by your numeration tables. Till then, we do not think, numeration can help us much. The matter only becomes difficult to us through our inability fully to comprehend what is meant by a Divine Person, or by Divine personality. We could not be expected clearly to know that. There must ever come a point to us, not in this matter alone, but in all matters, at which knowledge ends, and faith must take its place. The whole of the mystery of Divine nature, Divine unity, Divine personality lies *so* far above us; and we are wandering down here amid the errors and obscurities of time, and our vision is short-sighted and dim, and comprehension is impossible for us, for how can we who are finite and frail find room in ourselves to comprehend the Absolute and Infinite;—and, ah, my friends, is it not the meek and lowly spirit that ever besseems us best, that can but veil its face before all the unspeakable mysteries of God, that seeks to believe where knowledge cannot help it further, that is content only to know God, and to receive with trustful reverence all that He has chosen to reveal of Himself?

My friends! you may be beginning to feel that we have been dealing far too coldly with a subject that requires love far more than logic at our hands. It is wearisome, perhaps, you feel, to be doomed to listen to dialectic subtleties about One to whom many of your souls are looking with hope and unspeakable joy, as the source of all that is best in you, as

the author of Eternal Life, the Giver of the Spirit of adoption to you. Let us now, therefore, for a moment or two, ere we are done, forget that there has been any controversy about the person of Immanuel, and think of Him only as our Saviour and Lord, in Whom we have risen from the dead, through Whom we have come to know the Father, by Whom we have our sins forgiven. Many of us, I trust, have found Him to be "the Way, the Truth and the Life," have got from Him the power to become Sons of God. And now we share with Him a humanity that He has ransomed from the cares, confusions, and guilt of time, from the fierce fight with sin and death, that He has taken with Him to Heaven, and glorified above all the powers and principalities there, in which He exercises all power and authority to the end of the world. When with our weary, laden hearts, we come to the Throne of Grace, and ask Him for grace and help, we have this confidence that He who hears us there is One, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, who has been tempted and tried, and passed over all that is roughest in life or death, who sympathizes with all our pain and weakness and is ready to give us relief. He suffers in His own person no longer, for long past now is all His conflict with powers and dominions of evil; but when the members of His mystical body suffer, He feels with them, and the pang that rends their heart touches also a chord in His, and their anxious cry procures His ever ready help. And when it is even the conscience of sin or short-coming that is troubling any, and the longing for forgiveness, of which the desponding soul feels itself all unworthy, He has still the power on earth to forgive sin, and hastens to ease the troubled heart by His gracious absolution. Ah! have we really tasted of this grace of the Lord. Are we right because we have His righteousness given us? Are we alive from the dead, because He Himself has become Eternal Life to us? If so, there is then also a *theanthropic* element in our lives. He has begotten us unto a lively hope, has made us children of God, partakers of the Divine nature. God is dwelling in us also. The incarnation of the Word is a sign to us of a work of Divine manifestation, of Divine indwelling going on in all the Children of God. There is a life in us that is not temporal, but eternal, not of the world, but of God and wholly Divine. The *Godmanhood* of Christ is mirrored, is, we might almost say, repeated in us. The Word who was made flesh—the Living Christ is formed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and has become to and in us the Eternal Life, the Hope of Glory.—AMEN.

LECTURE V.

SOUL AND SPIRIT.

COR. II., 14.—“The natural man (*psychicos*, soulish man) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.—CR. c. xv., 45, and HEB. iv., 12.

I HAVE spoken to you of God in relation, both to nature and to man—of God, further, as revealing Himself to us both in a written word and in a living Person, in His own Son, whom He has sent. We have now to consider how we are fitted to receive any truth about God and the things of God—what faculty there is in us for receiving and discerning anything from such a quarter, about such an object. When we have had occasion, hitherto, to speak of man, we have not been very careful to make any distinction in man's own powers. As there is a very marked distinction between those two words which form the subject of our lecture to-night, it is needful that we should carefully investigate what it is. The common idea seems to be that all that is not material about us is only one essence, soul or mind or spirit as we may indifferently call it, and that every object, whether of knowledge or of faith, whether pertaining to this life or to another, to the world or to God, must just appeal to the same tribunal in us, must be judged by the same mental power. But it becomes a question how far that power in us which is concerned with the phenomena and forces of an outward, visible world, which classifies, generalises, systematises, and grows scientific upon the head of these, can grow wise also regarding those things of which the senses give us no hint, regarding which the senses are altogether silent or blind for us. The soul, intellect, or however else you may call it, derives its ideas—its knowledge—from the senses, and can hardly rise above what is sensational. It is bounded by sense and whatever sense tells it, and if it tries to rise above that, it is ever pulled back, as the bird that is held fast by the school-boy's string, and forcibly reminded of its captivity. But there is that in us, nevertheless, that tells us that we are not wholly to be controlled by sensible things, just as the wings of the tethered bird are a standing protest against the string. We have longings after something higher—dim conceptions of what is not seen and finite and temporal, but is unseen, infinite, and eternal. We feel that there are truths, could we but get at them, that lie beyond the range of the senses, which they meanwhile are telling us nothing of—truths,

therefore, in reference to which our attitude must be altogether different from that which we hold towards natural things ;—before which it is ours not to philosophise, and classify and separate, but to believe and worship. There is that in us that must think and reason just as the world *is*, just as we see the phenomena of the world to be. But there is that in us too which reaches beyond the world and its phenomena, which seeks converse with Eternity and God. The soul has its difficulties about all things pertaining to God or to Eternity—difficulties which, to the soul alone, are rather hard of solution. Sore perplexities surround all that is supernatural ; doubts which will not grow clear for all attempts to unravel them, bristle round all that is eternal, to the thinking faculty in man. Other things—the phenomena or laws of the outward creation, do brighten into greater certainty and distinctness as we investigate them, and as ages of intelligent men succeed each other. But all questions about God, His existence, His providence, His grace, do not grow much clearer by mere thought about them : they have more doubts encircling them now probably, after all the high soulish development to which man has reached than ever before. Left to itself, the soul cannot see its way into or through those things : the more highly the human intellect gets developed, the more hard and subtle questions it is able to raise about them—the more doubts it feels forced to entertain. That, my friends, may seem curious enough, but if you consider it attentively, you find it perfectly true. There never was an age that *thought* like this one—let that be granted to it. There never was an age in which an avowed atheism and a determination not to believe in aught supernatural abounded more. And these two “signs of the times” are not unconnected. The one is, to a large extent, to be taken as cause of the other. By mere thinking, unluckily, men do not come to the comprehension of God, or of what St. Paul calls the things of the Spirit. The natural or mere soulish man cannot receive those spiritual things. When the Apostle declares that to us, he does not barely mean what theologians call the unregenerate man. The question of regeneration or the want of it, is not just the one of which St. Paul is here treating. He has been speaking of wisdom, that speculative “wisdom of the world,” that was to come to nought. He has been contrasting that with what he does not hesitate to call the “foolishness of God”—that Divine folly of the Cross which reveals mysteries of Eternal Truth of which no heathen sage had ever dreamt, nor any soulish man had ever conceived. The eye of man had not seen, the ear of man had not heard, it had not entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which, in the revelation of Himself by His Son, God had prepared for them that love Him. The mere man of the soul—he who does nothing else but think and speculate and reason, cannot take in those things that are of God—they are folly or something worse in his eyes. They need a power of spiritual discernment which lies quite beyond the province of the soul, which is not in exercise in the soulish man. So far as any one is only soulish, the things of the Spirit are all dark to him.

Metaphysicians, it must be confessed,—those who have to deal with *immaterial* humanity as the object of their science,—have their difficulties

to contend with—difficulties which are not growing less, but more, in these days of advance and of over-civilization. There seems indeed to be a pretty extensive persuasion among many who have thought earnestly on the subject, that metaphysics as a science, had better get itself abolished as soon as possible, and see if there is no chance of something better springing from its ashes. It seems not at all unlikely that the thinking world will make up its mind very soon that everything about which it can occupy its attention must fall under one or other of the two heads, of natural science on the one side, of theological enquiry on the other; and that so-called metaphysical science must be content to divide itself, and class itself partly under the one of these two categories, partly under the other. All researches into the nature and constitution of the human mind seem to be regarded as barren and unprofitable. While men have been learning so much more than had ever before been known of the facts and laws of nature, the human mind has been making no progress in the knowledge of itself. In reference to such enquiries, the philosophic world is standing just about where it stood in the days of Aristotle or of Plato. With all our Scotch metaphysics, German metaphysics, French eclecticism and I don't know what, the net-result that has been reached by this thoughtful nineteenth century is the painful conclusion that there is but small knowledge attainable in that direction. There have been speculations in plenty—whole crops, for those who may choose to reap them, of theories, hypotheses, what not—in reference to the laws and phenomena of the human mind—discoveries, we may safely say, there have been as good as none. Men have gone on disputing, wrangling about and about these things, till they have made them, dark enough before, much darker—"raising a dust," as Bishop Berkeley calls it, "and then complaining that they could not see;" and after all the centuries of high and zealous discussion, men who still try to handle such matters feel that they have just to begin at the beginning again. Only on one side, natural science has been groping its way upward, and has been touching upon that "misty marge," that dim, ill-defined boundary which separates the realm of matter from the domain of mind—bringing a little of its scientific light to bear upon questions that the metaphysician had formerly claimed as all his own. While, again, there are other questions connected with the nature of man as an immaterial being, that are being recognised as being far more akin to all that is theological, supernatural, eternal.

This partition of the metaphysical territory—giving one part up to natural science, another to theology—seems already to be prefigured in the speculations of the two great rival schools that have, from the beginning, been disputing for the supremacy there. On the one side, we have had the sensationalists who, seeing that the soul is dependent on the impressions made through the senses by an external world, have with the greatest consistency, ascribed all the knowledge we possess or can possess to the agency of sensation. There is no other avenue, according to them, by which we can reach the temple of truth save that one avenue of the nervous system with its five strange senses. The soul is naturally a blank, a *tabula rasa*, fitted only for taking on impressions from other things. The

eye brings in tidings of a world full of remarkable forms and colors, and writes its communications clear upon the blank page. The ear fetches in its sounds and voices to add to the growing scripture. Touch tells us of heat, hardness, and other qualities of matter. A new class of ideas comes by the taste, another by the smell. We may make what we are able of the stock of knowledge thus obtained, but the source of all our knowledge is just those senses and nothing else. But there is another class of philosophers who are not at all content with sensation as our sole source of knowledge or belief. They tell us that we have other conceptions or ideas, *innate*, *cognate* or however else they call them, which we bring into the world with us as part of our mental furniture, and these, in due time, come to consciousness in us, independently of the senses. These root ideas are in the mind—it is they, perhaps, that most truly constitute the mind. They are the seed; your sensations, impressions, and what not, are only the necessary soil or moisture that enables the seed to grow. Well: mental or moral philosophers have never got quite clear of the darkness in reference to such matters, and the two hostile schools are as busy disputing about them now as ever—with as poor a chance of success, I fear, as ever. The tangled brake does not seem to grow less thick for all their philosophic cutting and hewing. The weary labyrinth will not shew them to the door and the sunshine after all their interminable wanderings. The sparks they have been striking with all their philosophic or unphilosophic flints and steels, are not the daylight, by any means, and have not the least prospect in the world of growing into the daylight. The two rival schools go off farther and farther from each other, it may be farther and farther from the truth itself, which luckily or unluckily, seems little disposed to trust itself to the guidance of either, till after whole floods of metaphysical "*clish maclaver*" the gloom is more hopeless, more helpless than at first. The sensational philosopher carrying out his conclusions to their fullest, dreariest consummation, is apt to sink into sheer materialism and atheistic unbelief;—the conceptualist may be led on in his own career into the cold moonshine of a barren pantheism, and speculations about the infinite, eternal abysses, silences, and the Absolute that is immanent in ourselves, which are a pain and a weariness to all who try to meditate them at all. Indeed, it too often happens, as we have the most melancholy proof abundantly in these days, that the two starting off in different directions, and going round the whole world of thought by such opposite routes, meet together again at the antipodes, where their language, under the strangest diversity of dialect, sounds very much the same: "There is no God, at least, none worth speaking of; the highest thing we have found with all our searching, is the human mind itself."

All this bears, more than you at present see, upon the subject before us, and we must venture into the consideration of it a little further. I have to speak to you of soul and spirit, as being each a component of what is immaterial in man—of the difference between them, of the bearing they severally have on Christianity as a system of revealed truth. Now, right or wrong, the soul has, for the most part, been sent

in for a monopoly of all the immaterial parts and powers of humanity. Men fancy that there is nothing higher about us than the soul. If people have spoken of the human spirit, it has been only as a synonym for that which is soulish in us. And in this state of proud self-assertion and divorce from any spiritual essence higher than itself, it has fared otherwise than well with the soul, I think. The soul has been thus at one time plunged, as we said, in the mire of materialism, and at another led forth into dim, transcendent regions where there was as little rest for it as for that patriarchal dove in the old diluvian days. Now, in looking at the bare soul itself and the experiences through which it is destined to pass here, we certainly do find, as the sensational class of philosophers has told us, that it is dependant wholly for all its knowledge and growth on what is outside itself. We have experience of the soul obtaining knowledge through the senses—we have no experience, properly so called, of any knowledge that reaches us *from outside*, in any other way. We have not any direct knowledge even of the soul itself, as an immaterial essence. So far as we can make any investigations into its nature, it is no more than the mere receptacle and reservoir for all the impressions that come to it from without. It receives these, stores them up for future use, and so long as the soul is alive in us, can turn them to some account. We know little more than that. We know that if any one of the senses be dead in us—if wisdom, by one of those entrances, is quite shut out, there is a large class of ideas which is utterly lost to us. The eye, when it is in exercise, gives us the knowledge of all that is visible, gives us those impressions of things which we can get from things only when they are seen. But the soul itself, in this direction, is utterly blind, if the eye is. There is a large sum of truth which the blind man is unable to take in. There are a great number of things which you or I who have our eyesight, know perfectly well, of which he can know nothing. To him the sun, which fills our souls with light, which paints the whole creation in such fair colors, and discloses it to us under such various forms, is only something felt and not seen, whose presence makes him warm, whose absence makes him cold, that is known to him only in so far as it can appeal to some other sense besides the seeing one. The earth which smiles out on us from its mantle of green, whose mountain brows rise so solemnly over us with their covering of primeval snow, whose valleys laugh with corn, whose pastures are dotted with sheep, whose plants and flowers enchant us with their winsomeness—that earth, to him who is blind, is only a hard substance, on which he can walk without sinking, some of it almost horizontal, and other parts more or less inclined to be steep. Whatever amount of soul may be in him, it can teach him nothing of all that which can be learnt only through the eye. And the same is equally true of the soul in relation to each of the other senses. The want of any one of them involves a certain amount of ignorance from which there is no escape—a certain amount of knowledge which is altogether unattainable. So that, if we could conceive, not one, but all the senses to have become dead in us,

useless as avenues of knowledge, the soul itself must be an utterly hopeless blank, without power to reach to the comprehension of any sort of knowledge whatever. Just conceive, if you can, a soul thus locked up in a body, within a living organism, but without any power of sensation, with no single one of those five senses left to it. There could be no thought possible in such a case, for the materials for thought would be wholly wanting. There could be no sense or feeling in reference to any conceivable thing. Wisdom, not by one entrance, but by all entrances, would be wholly excluded. The soul could find no employment for itself—would, in fact, be all the same as dead and non-existent.

Undoubtedly the knowledge once received in the soul from the senses, admits of being reflected, reasoned upon. We have a power of drawing conclusions from what we have seen or heard. But for the most part, such conclusions are somewhat dubious, liable to error. The farther we go away from the direct evidence of the senses in our speculations, the more liable are we to error. And as the things of the Spirit of God lie further removed than any other from the domain of sensation, the soul, left to itself, is most of all subject to error when it begins to speculate about them. If it reasons from what the senses have told it up to high, transcendant, eternal things with which they can have nothing to do, it is sure to get into fogs and darkness from which it cannot deliver itself. If we seek to reach such unspeakable results only through some process of reflection, is there not always room for fear that our reflections,—our conclusions, may be wrong? May we not be making some grievous mistake in rising from the sight of what is seen to the thought of the Unseen, from the contemplation of the temporal to the consciousness of the Absolute and Eternal? If our knowledge of God, of Immortality, depends only on some process of reflection, of dialectics, is it not somewhat more than possible that we may be wrong in a region on which the very light of logic itself lies only faint and dim? The soul, according to any rational interpretation of it as a thinking principle, is the born slave of the five senses and the nervous system, and cannot go any higher than these will allow it to go. I for one am very deeply conscious that it is no system of metaphysics, however well devised, that can lead the soul to any freedom from the domination of sense, that can save it from that dark, frowning abyss of hopeless materialism that yawns before it. All our earthly philosophies seem only more certainly conducting it thither. They certainly seem to have very little salvation for the soul from such dreary results. Whether Christianity, which has something to say about salvation for the soul, means this also, along with other things, by the salvation it proclaims, we may see by-and-by. But I am quite sure that the soul, by itself, getting all its knowledge primarily only through the senses, *cannot* have any knowledge or certainty about God and the things of the Spirit of God. For aught the soul itself can teach us on the subject, the soul may be only some finer organization of matter,—matter in a higher state of efficiency, raised to some higher

power. And all its thoughts about Deity, Eternity, what not, may be only the speculations engendered or created by the very finest particles of the brain. All is dark to the soul, save for the light the eye sends in upon it,—all is dumb, but for the curiously wrought and curiously working tympanum of the ear:—all is dead, but for that marvellous faculty of touch with which somehow we have got endowed. It will not do to fence off such dark thoughts by dubious *a priori* talk of *immateriality* of the soul. We know and can know nothing of the soul as separate from matter. We have no experience of a soul that thinks without the medium of the bodily senses, of mere fleshly organs. We don't know of the soul as existing or doing its work without the body, and without sensation. All your psychologies, so long as they are only psychologies and nothing more, can give us no light on such dark matters. If we are to escape from such dire conclusions, must it not be on the supposition, which had dawned on the minds even of heathen men here and there, and which is very plainly declared in the Bible, that there is another and a higher principle in man than the soul, which is not, like the soul, bound down under the power of the senses, which stands in more immediate relation unto God and all that is Eternal:—in fact that there is a Spirit in man that connects him with God, just as there is a soul in him that connects him with matter? And is not the great fight that is taking place within the hearts of all men even this,—the fight between the soul which is connected with sense and the flesh and the world, and the spirit which comes from God and testifies of God;—between the soul, which would bring down the spirit itself under the power of sense, and the spirit that would raise the soul up out of its bondage to sense? And thus, when we speak of the salvation of the soul, do we not mean that it too may be drawn up and drawn forth out of those bonds that bind it to the flesh and all that is material, and may attain by God's own plan and in God's own way to that estate of spiritual freedom and reconciliation, of the necessity of which our consciences are ever bearing witness within us?

But, as the other and more idealistic school of philosophers also remind us, there are other things, other convictions and feelings in us that sensation, stretched to its utmost extent, will not cover or explain. There is that in us which fiercely protests against the dominion of sense, that will not let itself be bounded by that, be kept down by that, that is ever leading us out into the presence of solemn questions regarding which the senses have no manner of revelation to offer us. Sensation makes us acquainted with an outward world,—teaches us one thing or another about that. But beyond the range of all such knowledge, there lies a world of mystery, as I told you before, altogether unknowable by any ordinary process of investigation. Can we by no means at all have entrance into that supersensual world, or have at least tidings reaching us out of it? There is a sense, a consciousness, of Infinity, of Eternity, of God forcing itself in upon us in spite of all our sense-bound, time-bound narrowness. That unspeakable, super-

natural world (if we may venture to call it world) is hanging all round us here, comprehending within itself as a very little thing this very finite world of natural earthly things, which lies within it as a very "drop in a bucket." Man everywhere, everywhen, feels that it must be so. Around me, stretching out from me on every side is infinity : around me evermore is God. In spite of all *soulish* doubt and ignorance I cannot help feeling, believing that. And why do I feel thus? What is it in me that is so ill-content with all that is seen and temporal, that urges me ever onward, upward, as a very storm wind, forcing me to seek, over those strange, mysterious seas, converse with all that may lie beyond, with all that is invisible and Eternal which may lie behind all the mists and gloom of time?—Man is a religious animal, they say, and cannot help being that. Where did his feeling of religion come from? That sort of instinct, which fills him with consciousness of God, that ever, as a strong chain, drags him back from the black brink of Atheism, even when he himself is little inclined to come, and forces him to bow the knee before the Eternal, that darts in upon him, in hours often of sullenest, loneliest gloom and the utter dark, as a gleam of Heaven's own light amid all the shadows of this nether world, making it impossible to doubt or hesitate or question any more;—whence has that come to us?—how has that got hold of us? No sense has told us of these things : no experience has discovered them to us ; with all searchings of the soul, we could never have got at *them*. Yet we believe,—cannot help believing. There is that in us which seeks after such things as its daily food, which desires to live in them as its only fitting atmosphere. Far above sense and time and nature there are things in which we too, we feel sure, have an unspeakable interest, and through all the clouds and doubts of time they are pressing in upon us, making us at least sensible of their presence, even though we feel ourselves very ignorant of their nature.

And hence men who have thought deeply of all such matters, having that strange consciousness of the supernatural in them, of so much in them that sensation could not explain, that none of the senses could the least grasp, have found themselves driven to the supposition of certain fundamental ideas impressed originally upon the soul, which grow to fuller consciousness as the soul grows in understanding. "These lie at the root of all truth and knowledge for us, and we would be nothing if we had not got them. There is an idea of God for example, naturally born *in* or born with the soul, and every soul has got that to start with, whether the soul uses it rightly afterwards or no. It must be there, for it grows up in us, and unfolds itself more and more definitely in the growth of all healthy consciousness." Unfortunately this sort of *a prioristic* psychology is liable to a few preliminary objections :—to this one to begin with, as the most of your *a priori* theories are, that it wants the test of experience. You have experience of the soul's powers, of the soul's action. You know how it works, how its ordinary ideas are formed, and can trace such ideas to their source. You cannot do that with any of those ideas about the supernatural that

are in you. We have not observed such congenital ideas in their earliest stages. They may, for aught we know, exist in the child, but we cannot observe them there. We are not sensible of their presence before we begin to observe and to reason. And if any man tells you, as there are plenty to tell you, that no such ideas are, or ever have been in him, it is like to fare ill with you then with your theories of inborn ideas. You may maintain, as vehemently as you please, that they are in you, that there are thoughts in your soul that sensation and an outward world did not give you, that came to you by no experience at all but from impressions that were prior to all experience; but if your neighbour maintains that it has not been so with him, that he for his share, has not had any such *a priori* intuitions about God and the things of God, you are just left sitting where you were, and the whole question remains exactly *in statu quo ante bellum*, in the same position in which it was before there was any controversy about it at all. For, so long as you proceed on the assumption that it is just the same principle in man,—the same soul, that receives the impressions of God and supernatural things, as that which deals with the experiences of outward, visible things, and thus subject the knowledge of all that is supernatural to the operation of bare psychological laws, you are in danger of losing the whole point in dispute. The soul, so far as we know it, can only act from experiences afforded it by sensation; when it leaves these, it is out in a world that is all vague and dim to it, where knowledge ends, and only speculation remains, a speculation without rule and without end. Hence, as we see, not without sadness, this class of conceptualist or idealistic philosophers, have come to indulge in all sorts of baseless, dreamy hypotheses about the absolute and the non-absolute, the identity or non-identity of the Me, and not-Me, the All and the Nothing, and I know not what else of philosophic moonshine, which it would be wearisome for me to utter even if I could, and very unprofitable for you to hear. The amount of marvellous human thought which has been thus wastefully expended in these days, not in working out any deliverance in the earth, but in hunting after vain metaphysical theories, is surely somewhat astonishing. Filling their bellies, as we may say, with the east wind, which cannot nourish them to any great extent, but is apt to come back from them as it went into them, only charged with a deal of unhealthy, philosophic gas;—trying to give some sort of learned solution of what is quite insoluble by mere learning: ticketing a certain number of unspeakable mysteries with hard Greek or other names, and then thinking that the mystery is taken clean out of them, that they are wonderful, unspeakable, no more;—it is thus our metaphysicians for the most part have been acting. They have taken a heavy task upon themselves, and the results have been but few. Their psychologies—theories of the soul, have not carried them very far, just because, I fancy, these have been psychologies and nothing more. The soul, in presence of all supernatural things, ought to feel its own helplessness,—to know that such things lie beyond its own province. But instead of that, it has been claiming

them as all its own, and losing itself in consequence among things too high for it, and wandering farther away from certainty and truth. It has unfortunately got to believe that ideas of God and of all that is Eternal are things only to be reasoned and speculated about, in reference to which any number of metaphysical cobwebs are to be spun out of the philosopher's own consciousness. Reverence, worship, the utter, childlike giving up of selfwill to another, an Infinite will, are pretty well lost sight of on such terms. The human soul is supreme arbiter ;—is to accept this idea, or reject that, or to create some other,—to decide what thought about God is right, and which is wrong, just as if its thoughts could at all alter the ultimate facts of the universe. And so men have gone on, one dreaming off in one direction, another *mooning* and speculating in the opposite direction, each thinking his own way right and infallible, and his neighbour's utterly heretical and damnable, a very root of evil and mystery of iniquity, till truth has pretty well got tired of the whole loud, Babelish business, and taken herself off into private life, till less stormy weather comes round again. It is only too sadly true, my friends. The speculations of modern philosophers in reference to the Absolute and the Eternal are like terrible mountain heights, where sheer precipices yawn on either hand, and the unmelting snows chill and freeze you, and the air is too thin for ordinary use and tries the panting lungs terribly, and the air above is no longer hopefully beautifully blue, but seems rather an Infinite of blackness and darkness. So little can the soul alone effect in reference to Eternal things. So true it is, as the Apostle declares, that the natural—the soulish man, cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are (not soulishly but) spiritually discerned.

The realm of metaphysics, instead of being a proper field for a separate science, is rather, therefore, as I said before, to be regarded as a dim border land between natural science and theology. Natural science can tell us something about the soul. It can teach us a little of the nature of sensation, and so far, therefore, it can make known a little of the soul's action, in reference to external things. Even there, as in every field of science, there are mysteries which science cannot explain, questions for which, after all our asking, science can furnish us with no answer. But it can trace out and declare certain phenomena for us. It can state some of the laws that lie at the foundation of human thought. But it can say almost nothing about the human spirit. It cannot tell us why this sense of right and wrong, this sense of a moral law, this feeling of a Law-giver and a Judge should have grown up in us. It cannot explain to us why that craving after converse with supernatural, Eternal things should be in us, nor declare with any certainty what truths these longings of the heart foreshadow. These things belong rather to the domain of theology, and are to be determined by such light as we can get from theological quarters. Only two things are very clear to us about such intimations of God, of Eternity in us. They *are* there for one thing, existing within us, refusing to go out of us, seeking after some truth that nature and all

natural science cannot give us any knowledge of. And for the second thing, they lie beyond the range of the soul's investigations, of the soul's capabilities: the soul, so far as we can understand its nature and operations, has nothing to reveal to us about them. It can speculate and reason about them, can theorize and philosophize and form all manner of windy hypotheses about them. And it claims, often vehemently enough, the exercise of freedom of thought about them. Only alas! *freedom of thinking* is not always *rightness of thinking*. Some people seem to think it is. Let a man only be earnest in his thoughts and beliefs in reference to all matters that are not merely natural. Let him only keep in exercise his liberty of thinking for himself, and walk according to the light that is in himself, and all is right with him. Unfortunately, there is no truth whatever, whether in natural or in supernatural things, that will let itself be changed in order to suit our changeful thought. Unfortunately truth must remain the same, whatever our thought or belief about it may be. A man's liberty of thought is, therefore, necessarily bounded by the truth of the objects of his thoughts. That is the one limit to all freedom of thought. Other limits, the opinion of the majority or whatever else, have certainly no business to weigh much with us in such solemn matters. But we may be sure that there is a true and a false, a right and a wrong in all matters regarding which we can think, and that all our thought about them will not make that false which is true, nor that true which is false. Truth injured by any speculation will vindicate, will avenge itself in due time, you may be sure, and bring what we call judgments of God upon the head of the wrong-headed thinker. Considering that Eternal truth is prior to all human thought, we may say that absolute freedom of thinking is as good as impossible in this world. The truth will prove itself stronger than any thought or than any thinker. A man may assert for himself the freedom of voting the gravitation law a mistake, a delusion and a lie; but if, by way of vindicating his opinion, he should step off from the top of some tall, sheer cliff into the empty air beyond, he might have the saddest reason to see, ere the life was smashed out of him, that the opinion of the majority on that subject was a safer one than his own, and that the truth of gravitation could not at all be altered to suit his thought about it. And in reference to things Divine and Eternal, a man is equally at liberty, so far as you and I are concerned, to think whatever he may choose:—whether he has any absolute right given him from the proper quarter, to think aught that is untrue, is of course quite a different question. And even whether the soul itself is the proper judge in reference to such matters, is a thing that is not to be decided by what you or I may think about it. There are limits to our freedom of thought here as elsewhere,—limits in the truth to be got at, limits also in the nature of the thinking principle, the soul itself. Scientific *psychologies* cannot help us much here: let us see whether a Christian *pneumatology* can help us.

There is a spirit in man,—this is surely the conclusion to which we are driven,—a spirit which is not the soul, though so closely connected

with it, which is different from it, in its essence, in its origin, in its operations. Even heathen philosophers have spoken to us of a spiritual nature of man, distinct from the soul;—the Bible has clearly declared it to us. There is a principle in man that testifies to him of what is absolute and not conditioned at all, of absolute right and wrong, of absolute law, of an absolute Law-giver. Not through sensation or experience or the ordinary operations of the soul do men come to the knowledge of such truths. It is not the soul,—which, as we saw, is bounded, conditioned, by sense,—that comprehends such things. It is not investigations conducted by the soul that can lead us to the understanding of them. The ideas of God, of Eternity, even of duty, are not derived from hard, logical processes, or from any series of long, inductive experiences. And to speak of intuitions or innate ideas of the soul, or to use other such metaphysical jargon about them, is only complicating matters by the use of words of which you can give no intelligible definition. The fact is simply this, that we have that in us which bears witness to those high truths which we, by our intellectual faculties, cannot discover. It is not the soul, for often and often the soul is found refusing to accept the testimony or to act according to the dictates of the inward monitor. There is often and often a struggle, a hard, fierce conflict going on within us; two minds, as it were, warring the one against the other, the one testifying against the bondage and defects of the other, the other refusing to submit to the truth delivered by the one. It is not the same principle sitting in judgment between rival advocates, now leaning more to the one, now inclining rather to the other. There are two laws in us, the sense-bound law of the soul, the eternal law of the spirit; and there are two active principles corresponding to the laws. The higher principle you may call spirit, or you may call it conscience or by whatever other name you please,—it need not matter much about the name: but it is there, testifying for God amidst all that is seen, sensible, temporal, seeking to deliver us from the bondage of the time-spirit, to raise us into fellowship with what is Eternal and unseen. The inferior principle cannot, by any inherent power of its own, rise above the things of time and the world. The Bible, whatever we may be, is always very careful to preserve this distinction. The things of the soul are not there confounded with those of the spirit: the things of the spirit are not there ascribed to the soul. The word of God, as we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, is quick and powerful, piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit. Metaphysics, systems of philosophy and what not, are unable to pierce so far;—are unable, from their point of view, to comprehend or make clear the difference. But in the New Testament there is no dubiety at all. The soul is always there the inferior principle, fettered by sense and time, unable to set itself free, needing a Divine, a Spiritual power to save it. The spirit is always there the more divine, god-like principle in us, the thing that is not natural, but created, that has not come to us by any birth or generation from the parents to whom we owe our life, but that has been made by God and

which is therefore good. So thoroughly is this distinction observed in the Greek New Testament that our translators, for fear, I suppose, of compromising certain theological tenets of their own about the soul, have been frequently afraid to render the Greek *psyche* in our version by its proper English equivalent, and have thus produced a confusion of ideas in our English Bibles which certainly the Spirit of God never meant to be there. Thus, in a very celebrated passage, in which our Lord asks, "what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul," our translators have rendered the word rightly enough. But in the verse immediately before,—a verse of the most unspeakable moment for the right interpretation of the Lord's meaning, they have involved the whole matter in hopeless confusion through their fear of putting this business of the soul's salvation on an altogether wrong footing; and, instead of saying, as Christ undoubtedly did say, "he that saveth his *soul* shall lose it, and he that loseth his *soul* for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall find it," they have been guilty of the unworthy, subterfuge of translating the word that means soul by *life*, and of thus making the Saviour declare, what, on any honest interpretation of this latter word, is palpably untrue. (See the passage in Matthew 16: 24—26.) In other places in the Bible the word has fared no better in their hands. And the corresponding adjective that means soulish,—what pertains to the soul, has presented such insuperable difficulties to them that they have rendered it at one time by the term natural, at another by the word sensual, neither of which expressions can at all tell us what is meant. The Church, I fear, has a great deal yet to learn in reference to this "dividing asunder of soul and spirit," which is one of the chief works for the purpose of doing which the word of God has been given. We shall never know what is meant by that word of which we hear so much, "the salvation of the soul," unless we are as careful as the Bible is, to maintain the distinction. The soul, held in by the narrowness of sense, held down by the weakness of the flesh, whatever high achievements it may attain to in science or in art, cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. It needs deliverance from the confinement of what is temporal,—to be raised, through fellowship with what is spiritual, to the contemplation of those high, Eternal things which it cannot itself discover. It is the spirit in man that comes first into contact with those things that are of the living God, and transmits them also as new principles of life to the soul. For, amid all the darkness of this human nature, of this present human life, this light from God which is in us, keeps shining on, and though we may obscure or disturb, though we may even extinguish it, still it has been there, and the embers of it are not quite dead. It has been given by God as a guide to us, to raise and ennoble us in our thoughts and aims, and to lead us on in the way on which we ought to go. It has its difficulties with us, as we know,—finds its work often quite *undoable* in us, and must abandon its work, leaving its solemn protest and the saddest consequence behind it. It has to raise the soul, not merely out of the mud and slime of the flesh, but

out of the self-sufficiency and arrogance of an intellect that is bounded by the things of sense;—and the soul is unluckily averse to acknowledge its need of any such elevating process. It has to bear witness of an ever-present God, of our need to be brought to the full realisation of such a presence. But the eye of the mere natural understanding keeps itself shut rather than not against such witness, or blinks *owlishly* out of its darkling places upon the truth that is often no more than welcome. So that, in the case of ever so many, the conscience or spirit has as good as abolish itself, or at least has to abdicate its higher functions, and let its voice grow ever dumber amid the ever deepening shadows of Eternal Death as these fall thicker and more hopeless over the soul.

God by *His* Spirit speaks unto that which is spiritual in man. Because we have that in us which is not merely natural or *soulish*;—because we have besides a spirit in us, therefore, when God, who is a spirit, speaks to us, we are able to hear Him. It is because we have a spiritual substance in us that we are fitted for the reception, for the comprehension of spiritual truth. God has in this way not been unjust to us. If He holds us responsible for the reception of what is Divine, He has first of all provided us with the faculty for reception. He has furnished us forth with something more than mere intellect or power to investigate the things that present themselves to the notice of our outward senses. Great is the human soul, but it is not the greatest—not even in ourselves. There is a spiritual nature in us which, from its very lowliness and humility, as knowing that its proper attitude is not that of loud and proud self-assertion but that of the deepest, most reverent prostration and self-abasement before a will that is higher than itself, that is absolute and unchangeable—feels that its business in the world is not to speculate and reason, or vex itself in any rude war of opinion or any of the subtleties of the schools, but only to look up in child-like wonder and worship through all the darkness of time for the light that cometh from God, that is sent by Him to enlighten all the darkness for us. Its function is not knowledge, but faith. Just where the light of natural knowledge can go no farther with us—out amid the mysteries of the Infinite, the Supernatural, the Divine, with which sense can have no converse, where thinking and speculation become only vain, helpless, confused things—there it has its proper sphere and home. Through all the dim, obscure of earthly life and worldly things, amid all the doubts, speculations, questions for which there is no solution in the soul, the spirit feels the intimations of present Deity; and hears, how ever indistinctly, the voice of an Infinite God—it may be of an Infinite Father—only the tumult around it is so loud it often cannot very well tell—speaking words of Eternal Truth, giving us something to believe when *knowledge* is unattainable, assigning solemn duties to us, of which the senses bear no witness. The Divine arms are not far from it, are round it—if it could only be allowed to rest safe and secure in them. And then, too, those things that are discovered to us by sense are but types of the eternal things that are

revealed to the spirit. The eye of the body takes in the light of heaven and by that light is able to enjoy all those grand and glorious sights which God's creation has to disclose: the light of the body is but an emblem of a spiritual light which beams in the eye of faith, of the spirit. The sounds and voices of earth that speak sweetly, soothingly to the *soul* are dim images to us of voices, that the spirit alone can give ear to, out of unseen Heavenly places, which make themselves audible to us when the world's rude roar for a season is hushed and still. Hunger and thirst, and the food and drink with which we satisfy these craving appetites, remind us of other objects of our desire, and tell us that man shall not live by bread alone, that there are words of God which alone can satisfy him.

But then, alas! this spiritual essence in us is certain, in the natural, unregenerate state of man, to get more and more enslaved under the powers of sense and the sense-bound soul. In the stern conflict that is being waged in us continually, it is apt to come off only 'second best.' The light which God has put and is keeping alive in us is often lost in the great dark about us. The monitions of the inner man are disregarded amid all the cares and temptations of the outer man. So that the office of the spirit, in great measure, is only to bear witness against wrong and unrighteousness—to testify of a Judge and a judgment—of a law that has been broken—of punishment that has become due. But where man's spirit is weak and powerless, God's Spirit is all-powerful. It was not a soulish, but a spiritual revelation man needed, and it is a spiritual revelation—a revelation by the Spirit man has got. The bible tells us of God as a Spirit: it tells us of a Spirit who proceeds from God and is God, who comes to strengthen our weakness, to instruct our ignorance, to lead us onward and upward into all truth, to give us faith to comprehend the mysteries of Eternity and God, faith by which we are raised above sense and saved from sin, by which the veil is torn off from the face of the Invisible, and seeing, knowing God, we become children of a Father in Heaven and heirs of Eternal Life. By the soul, we become by long processes of investigation and thought, possessors of what we call science; but as spiritual, we have also a *con-science*, a conscience which, under Divine guidance, becomes a knowledge by faith of what is altogether above sense and above nature. By the soul, we grow upward out of the child into the man in all understanding: in the things of the spirit, as I told you last Lord's Day, we have ever to go back into the child, to be converted and become as little children. And it is by becoming more and more spiritual that the soul itself is saved from sin. The gospel of Christ does not seek, as its first concern, to make us more soulish, more intellectual—we may become so without the gospel—but to make us more spiritual, more like Him who is a Spirit, and is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

And from all this we may also come to understand a little of what is meant by that other passage which I also read to you to-night, the *full* significance of which I am not sure I altogether know or am likely to

know, about the first man having been made a living soul, while the Second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, was made a quickening Spirit (1 Cor. xv., 45). Adam, after all, was mainly soulish, I suppose, and had it in him only to *grow* spiritual, if he had kept his first estate. I am not sure, even if he had remained unfallen, that we could have got from him all that we now get in Christ. I think not. It may have been even necessary—who shall tell?—that the accursed fall should have taken place, and that the human spirit, which was there in its germ in humanity, should come to be what Christ makes it, through that knowledge, that conscience of good and ill which came as the first—fruits of man's sin. There is, no doubt, a dark, a very dark side, to this picture. The human race, except some selected specimens, if we may so speak, getting hopelessly lost in confusion, sin, and Eternal Death; so many *souls* of men getting lost; so many nations and races even getting degraded into utter ungodliness and brutality—that is the awful sight the history of the world, not as written in the Bible alone, but elsewhere, gives us to look upon. That had to be, ere humanity in Christ could become that spiritual thing the Creator had designed it for. Well: we know that, ere man could grow to be even a living soul, there were a thousand types of being that had risen and perished and been lost, of which, we may say, the very mould in which they were cast had been as good as broken and thrown aside as useless for any further purpose. But the living soul of man grew at last out of all that seeming loss; the loss, it would seem, was necessary ere that wondrous end could be reached. And what do we know—for we are all in the dark and can see nothing as we need to see—whether this great loss that has taken place and is taking place in humanity, the loss of the soul, of so many thousand souls, was not necessary, in order that the soul itself might be wrought up into something higher, that man might grow up to his true position, as a spiritual and not a merely soulish being? But we shrink back from such questions. Vain, I fear, are all such speculations. We touch here upon the boundless dark and must come back to the light that has been given us for these lives of our own. Jesus Christ, the Second Man and Head of Humanity, in whose likeness we are formed, is, as St. Paul has told us, an actual quickening spirit. There is life in Him for us. The true, Eternal Life, is ours *in* Him, *from* Him. Faith in Him—His person and His work, which is the function of the regenerate spirit makes us sharers with Him in His righteousness, in His grace, in His glory—in that Life Everlasting which He has brought up from the grave, which He has taken on with Him to the Universal Throne. The renewed spirit learns to rejoice in *His* spirituality and to share it, and thus to live in light and love and God, and the soul itself is saved, quickened, spiritualized, and thought becomes sanctified, and man, more even than Adam himself was, becomes Divine.—AMEN.

LECTURE VI.

PROVIDENCE AND PRAYER.

PSALM XIX.

OF the subjects which I have to consider with you in this present course, not the least important by any means is that which now falls to be meditated by us to-night. The mysteries which may be involved in these two things, Providence and Prayer and the way in which they stand related, the one to the other, cannot but be felt sometimes to be oppressive and fraught with strange doubts to the thinking mind. To young souls, I suspect, the beginning of all scepticism often lies just here. They don't jump at once, by any *saltus mortal*is, into Atheism or Pantheism or any other of those dark, chaotic *isms*, that so sadly infect the thinking of this nineteenth century. A young man who, having been baptised in infancy, has been trained in Christian principle, who has been surrounded by the influences of domestic godliness, and has been early taught to look up to God as his Heavenly Father, to Christ Jesus as the embodiment of Divine love and the Author of Eternal Life, does not *at once* shed the envelope of an outward Christianity and stand before you a full-fledged unbeliever. But as he feels himself placed in a world of mystery and wonder, as he comes to understanding of the law and order that pervade and explain *some* part of the mystery, and as strange theories and speculations present themselves to his notice, he begins to feel as if the old traditional belief in which he has been brought up, were a good deal too narrow for him. Seeming contradictions, that he cannot reconcile, rise round him; questions for which he can find no fitting answer, vex and disturb his faith; doubts rise, frowning and terrible, of which he cannot rid himself by any easy patent plan yet known to him. The Heavenly Father recedes farther and farther out of the foreground of his mental vision: the covenant cords that bound him to God get more and more relaxed. God may not as yet be denied; the young soul does not yet question His being, His personality, His perfections. But—"He is not a God who is very specially connected with me;—not one who, in His providence, has bound or is binding Himself to me, nor One to whom any prayers of mine, can unite *me*. Not a

Father, to whom I am joined in blessed fellowship as a child to a parent on earth ;—not One who watches tenderly my every step and is thinking of my every care, who knows my troubles and can help me in them or out of them, and can give me comfort or guidance in any grief or perplexity. Not One who listens to me as I cry up out of all the distractions and darkness of time, and will give me the answer of peace that I require. He has ordered,—is ordering all things, according to rigid, inflexible Law—law that is deaf as the ocean-waves, heartless as the thunder's war, that cannot the least be altered or modified to suit any purpose or convenience of mine. Everything here goes on its own stern way, controlled by some iron fate which will not let it be otherwise than it is. I, too, am but one of the puppets in this everlasting show, driven by force of circumstance, controlled by *uneared*, inexorable destiny. Or at least, if this is not quite literally true, if there is still in me some freedom of will to shape my own ends and to accomplish my own plans, I cannot imagine that God can make things different for me from what they would have been, nor make other provision for me than what is provided for me already in the usual order of His working. To ask aught of Him, to suppose that He will give me aught only for the asking, were surely only 'impotence of mind.' Would it not be rather a pitiful conception of the Supreme, Absolute Being, to imagine Him from day to day and all day long making "special providences" for all His creatures, sitting for ever only to hear the suits, to supply the wants of those who may be praying, often rather selfish prayers, to Him? Thus the *soul*, by its thoughts and reasonings, goes in for cutting the connexion that binds God and the human spirit together. The covenant God who has been to some small extent, known and loved, loses His hold upon the thinker, who is only thinking not quite enough nor quite aright in this direction: the man more and more loses his hold of God. He has taken his first plunge in this infidel baptism, his first draught of the intoxicating cup of doubt. He has taken his first step on that dreary road that leads *from* God, and is ready to make further progress as time and circumstances allow.

From that grand old psalm that I have read to you, we may see at least how those brave fighting, praying Hebrews so long ago had been taught to look upon the connexion between God's providence and men's prayers. It is only one instance out of a multitude in which, in those old Scriptures, the harmony between the two is very clearly brought out, and they are looked upon as parts of our great whole:—God ruling according to His own will on the one side, showing forth His glory in the ordinary procession of day and night, in all the grand and vast phenomena of the universe:—man on the other side, in all humility praying for grace and for forgiveness,—both meeting in that central point which stands forth in such clearness in the middle of the Psalm, the *law* or *word* of the Lord which is perfect and converts the soul and makes wise the simple. Just mark for a moment the structure of this magnificent hymn, and see how the several parts of it, which at first may seem quite independent of each other, unite in forming one

grand, sublime whole. If we look at it as only a series of unconnected texts, the whole meaning, movement, life of it will be lost. The Psalmist first of all has his mind struck by the strange, altogether unspeakable majesty of the Almighty God. What can he himself say of it all,—with what words try to express it? That tale of infinite wonder is being told otherwise than by his lips. The heavens, the firmament are ever declaring God's praise. The sun, as he goes on his sublime path through heaven, is ever unfolding the marvels of creative power and skill, and as he sinks to rest, he but leaves the never ending tale to be continued on another day. And when the celestial vault, with its fretted wilderness of glowing stars, lights itself up when day has declined, it is but turning another leaf in the infinite wonder-book, and the godly, open soul drinks in but new delight from the reading of the magic record. Everywhere is God. Everything is speaking of God. It is He who has ordained all this strange world of heaven and earth, He by whose appointment the sun is shining, whose glory everywhere is manifest to the open heart. And this is no God who is afar off, who only leaves Himself to be spoken of by sun or star or firmament. He has Himself told us His will,—has made known to us His law—a law that converts the soul, that rejoices the heart, that entightens the eyes. He has spoken to us: His words are sweeter than honey from the comb. And when the servant of God is in perplexity, or when he is liable to be tempted, in these words of his God he has instruction and warning provided for him; and as he sets himself with humble and confiding heart, to observe the testimonies of the Lord, he finds already in the doing of these things an exceeding great reward. But alas! he finds, too, that at the best his life is a poor comment on that perfect law of the Lord. He is stupid and ignorant. He has not perfect understanding of the Divine words that have been spoken to him: he often but dimly understands his own aberrations from that perfect standard of right, "Who can understand his own errors?" But he does know himself to have been guilty,—in error or in sin. How much may lie involved in that sad, humiliating fact he cannot himself tell. But error and sin are growing more and more intolerable to him: he can no longer sit easy under the miserable load. He must be cleansed from all faults, even from those of whose nature he is but imperfectly conscious,—and God alone can cleanse him. He must be delivered from the power as well as from the guilt of the evil that is in him. He may still be liable, from inherent weakness, to fall into error, but by God's grace, he hopes to be kept free from all presumptuous, self-willed iniquity. God is his strength,—his Redeemer,—not One who is far from him, or indifferent to him, but whom he can trust to as having an unspeakable care of him, to whom he can go with all his weaknesses and shortcomings, from whom he can at all times get grace to support, to cheer and to deliver him. And therefore he does not fear to ask in conclusion that the words he speaks, the thoughts he is thinking about God may prove such as God Himself may approve, and may accept as a father does the cry of the child he loves. So thought

and so prayed that Hebrew king in that grey old time: so, I have no doubt, many are thinking and praying still. Surely an altogether remarkable psalm is this, realizing God as so glorious and yet as so near,—so lofty in its conceptions of God's unspeakable yet Fatherly providence, so childlike in the sublime simplicity of its own confiding prayerfulness. Amid all the doubts and disquietudes of our more modern time, is there not something calming, elevating in being allowed to breathe again the atmosphere of that old Hebrew faith?

One thing at least must be conceded to us. The conception of a mere idle, *faineant* Deity, who has only built the machine of the universe, and is sitting still now to see how it will work, who has appointed the laws by which His universe is to be governed, and is now leaving the laws and the universe to settle all matters as they can without any interference of His, is not at all a very edifying contemplation for men and women who are themselves surrounded by toil and trouble and grief, and who see no end to the work they have got to do. A God who is thus thoughtful only of His own ease and happiness,—such a luxurious, infinitely happy and infinitely idle Epicurus' God—is not at all the sort of Deity to whom the heart of the weary and the heavy laden can feel any great amount of attraction. Such burdened hearts will always feel that they can very well do *without* such a God as that. Yet, if we are to render into plain, blunt Saxon speech some of the high sounding philosophies of our time, which behave quite respectably towards the *name* of Deity, but which seem to ascribe all the work that is being done in the universe to bare laws and forces of nature, our idea of what God is and of what God does,—our idea in general of what use God is *for* in the world must be a very small and contemptible one. To judge from the philosophic phraseology current in many quarters now, you might imagine that God has as good as retired from business, probably since about the period of Voltaire and the French revolution and has left "laws of nature" and the rest of that company, to carry out the concern of world-government, only leaving His venerable name in the firm for a season, till those junior working partners get strong enough to do without it. You think, probably, that these words are far too near an approach to blasphemy to be at all agreeable. So, my friends, do I. But I don't feel that any part of the irreverence is to be charged against me. If you read many of the modern books of science or philosophy, you will find, I am quite sure, a great deal in them, which, after being stript of an ungainly envelope of learned phraseology, and done into intelligible English, means either something like what I have said, or else (which is also possible) nothing at all. The general effect of a large share of modern thought is the opposite of making us believe in God as a present God, working for our good around us and within us, and caring about us and our wants. Ah friends! I have to say this, not without sadness of heart, that there are many,—many probably among ourselves, who are able to think with all vigour and intelligence on all subjects that present themselves for their consideration, who have no practical use

for the thought of God at all. In sober earnest, though God is acknowledged, or at least not denied by them, He occupies no other place in their minds than if He were just such a Being as I spoke of, One who had His hand in His bosom and was complacently looking down on this strange *phantasmagoria* of a world as a thing with the actual management of which He had nothing further to do. In which sorry circumstances, it behoves us to stand still a little and consider what the idea of God as Governor of the world, actually implies.

When I told you that Providence and Prayer were to form the subject of to-night's discourse, I hope you will believe that I meant something more than just to have a taking alliterative title for an hour's talk to you, that I had not been guilty of any such small dishonesty as this *ad captandum* plan of catching your ear. I regard these two things as forming parts of one whole. I think that the one cannot be separated from the other without seriously damaging the balance of truth, as truth ought to be held by us. God is the Moral Governor of the universe, who has made it at first, and who continues to rule over it according to His own will. The marvellous order which He has impressed upon it, those strange laws which it is the mission of science to investigate and expound, are but the expressions of His Almighty Will. And it is a poor sort of science that will set itself to the interpretation of such laws without the previous understanding that a law means also a lawgiver, and a perfectly righteous Will that lies at the bottom of all natural law. Providence, therefore—the general conduct, that is, of the events and affairs of the world—is to be taken as *God realizing Himself* in His own acts, bringing Himself, so to speak, into action. Prayer, again, is *our* realizing of God in those same acts of His, our becoming acquainted with Him, not only as the Absolute, existing in and for Himself, but as One who is acting outwards upon all His creatures, upon us, especially, as moral beings subject to His moral government. God realizing Himself objectively in things which are not God—that is providence:—man realizing God, also objectively, in all His works, more especially as that work may have reference to ourselves—that is prayer. And the point in which these two things meet is the Will of God. Providence is *His* act, what is done according to His will—Prayer is *our* act, resting, however, upon that same Divine Will. He works outward from that—we work or pray inward, upward to that, and both for His providence and our prayers we have this as the common centre. Prayer may, no doubt, seem to be only an expression of our will, but if it is a right thing, it is only our will as seeking after entire conformity with God's own.

Prayer, as the utterance of our individual wills, may possibly, for aught we know, be opposed to the will of God, which is the fore-ordained order of the universe—an order which our wishes cannot break or alter. If God's providence be conducted according to law, we are tempted to think that it can be of little use that we, with our temporary wants, should ask and pray, however loudly, however vehemently, that His

Eternal Laws should be changed, so far as their operation does not just suit us. The idea of a Divine, Absolute Being, working according to a fixed plan, and the idea of our getting what we want from Him, may seem hopelessly irreconcilable. God cannot stop the whole working of the universal mechanism, and thwart and turn aside the current of destiny, and work what we may call a miracle, "a special providence," because we may have a mind that way. On every side our lives are hemmed in by a Divine rule which is altogether unalterable. There is no chance, no uncertainty at all, in the things that are to be, that as yet lie for us veiled in the thick mists of the future, through which no mortal eye can see:—of them the determining law is already in force, and is to bring them forth in only one possible way. To us it is all dubious and dark how they are to be—to God it cannot be the least doubtful. To Him the future is all as certain as the past, as fixed and unalterable. To us it may be of the utmost consequence that things take place in some particular way—in that and not in the opposite or any other way. But it is not our wishes that are to control the course of things. Things will go on their own way in spite of us, of our wishes and our prayers—"course of nature" will march on over us and our wills, very careless about our inclinations and desires, and we shall only have to submit. The iron car of destiny will roll over us if we be in its way, and crush our wills, our lives in the very dust. And though we may cry out in our bitter agony, and pray never so earnestly in our grief and pain, it will be all the same—the current of events will not be different for that. The voice of anguish and the cry of the sorrowful soul—the eager supplication for light from the poor child of humanity, lost amid all the fogs and darkness of time and time's rude trials—the sigh of the despairing heart, wailing over extinct hopes and perished joys, looking forward into a gloom through which no gleam of hope is shining more—the grief of the penitent, or the prayer of the poor; what can these effect in reference to those laws of the universe from which there is no escape, of whose working there can be no change? Of what avail then, we ask, is prayer? Is it not but as the child's feeble yell of agony as he falls beneath the cruel wheels of some deaf machine that is to crush the life out of him, and shed no tears over his corpse? Prayer! Is it not as the poor seaman's despairing cry, who has fallen from the dizzy yard as it rocked and groaned in the blast, as he plunges into the hissing wave from which no hand is ever to pluck him? Is it not as if *he* were to pray to the law of gravitation to suspend itself for awhile, or to the sea to grow suddenly calm, or to the furious hurricane to be still that he may yet have a chance of getting delivered from that inevitable death? Or as the cry of the helpless miner who sees the "sides of the pit" falling in upon him, and feels that there is no hope of his coming out thence a living man—as if he were to pray that that mass of falling earth might take itself back to its own place ere it makes an end of the life that is in him? Ah me! Above and around me is nothing but iron-hearted destiny and law, deaf as the very gates of hell to my cry, dead to all

sympathy with me as the cold and cruel sea. I am helpless in the midst of all, and there is none to succour me. And God Himself—how is it possible that *He* can interfere with His own wise order only to help or deliver me?

I have no doubt, my friends, that such difficulties are not, by any means, new to many of you. I have stated them here in all their force that we may just know what it is we have got to face. There is, doubtless, a certain amount of truth in them, otherwise they would not be felt to be so burdensome. We are to see now if there is any way of getting rid of them. The relation which we occupy towards God, which He occupies towards us, must, of course, depend on the amount of truth or the opposite, contained in such allegations. The idea of the government of the world by a fixed order, and that of prayer for individual blessings getting itself answered seem, as I have said, irreconcilable. Let us see now whether the seeming difference between them does not, after all, admit of reconciliation. May it not be that they are opposed only as the lines from opposite points in a circle, which run, no doubt, directly in the teeth of each other, but which meet, nevertheless, in the same centre? Or is the difference like that of light and darkness, the presence of either of which necessarily excludes the other? If the two things *have* reference both to the same great central fact, if providence by God on the one side, prayer on the other side by man, both meet and have their true meaning realized in an Infinite Will, Supreme over all things,—a will which is at once Infinite Law and Infinite Love, then the two things may not be so irreconcilable as they seem. We begin to feel that we have got a key that may unlock at once the double mystery, and bring into harmony the Almighty, Governing Will of God, and the feeble, needy will of man. And, more especially, if we find, as we may have found already, in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of Man, at once the crowning exhibition of providence and the true object of prayer, then here, too, in this sanctuary of sorrow beneath the cross, we obtain the right solution for this as for all other difficulties, the right relief for this as for all our burdens.

Certainly God is a God of order and not of confusion;—it still remains a question whether that order be not one founded on Infinite, Fatherly Love. Undoubtedly His laws are fixed and definite enough, not mutable in their nature, not uncertain in their operation. He could not be a Just God and a True, if that were not the case. If all were left uncertain, to be swayed by anything else than the force of law—if the Divine order could be broken or set aside for any or every cause—if the ordinary sequences of cause and effect were not at all fixed and stable, but loose, variable, and inconstant, we would then be in a world of endless confusion and uproar, and the Deity Himself might be held to be no better than One who had made a world that He did not know how to govern, which had a tendency—which He with all those cosmical arrangements could not subdue—to return to utter chaos again. We could not then trust to anything as altogether sure, for just when we

trusted it most, there might be some other circumstance operating elsewhere which made a change in the arrangement desirable. The whole creation would be a labyrinth out of which there should be no exit, "a mighty maze, and all without a plan." Meanwhile, no doubt, some of the laws of the universe may act sometimes very oppressively. We are hemmed in, we are kept down by them. Our poor, narrow, feeble lives feel them, again and again, pressing heavily on us. They close down round us on every hand, and we have to fight against them at most unequal odds, and as they sweep over us, bringing sickness or poverty, the endurance of pain, the death of loved ones, or the pressure of any sore adversity, and as we feel that we are powerless beneath them, we may be ready to complain that things are not rightly ordered somehow—that there is a terrible want of adjustment somewhere in this huge machine of a world that acts so cruelly upon us. And as we look round us in the world and see, everywhere, suffering and sorrow, pain and death, and hear the wail of anguish-stricken souls as the bleak, wolfish winds of adversity blow fiercely upon them, freezing the very life out of them; as we behold men trodden down in a grief that is growing more and more into hopelessness and despair, it is terrible enough to think that these things are but the natural results of natural causes. If these things had come into the world by accident, by some unrecognised way independent of the usual order of nature, we could imagine that there might be some deliverance for us. If these were, all of them, *disorderly*, we might dream of an order that might prove still stronger than they by and bye. But are we entitled to look upon them as only *disorders*? There is no one allowed to make the pilgrimage of life without many a sore and bitter heart by the way. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards. It is the natural, necessary order of things, for us and all men, that we taste of grief, that we be vexed with trouble, that our souls again and again get tormented by excess of woe.

Well: let it be. Still there is an order in the world—an order that we can trust. It may sometimes prove painful and burdensome; but it is there, a thing on which we can rely, according to which we also can order our lives and conduct. We are not left in utter uncertainty as to how things are to go. We have a God, not of confusion but of order, to look up to—not One who has left all the tangled threads of things and events to lie in ravelled and inextricable disorder, but whose plan is all arranged according to righteous order. We can trust Him, therefore, seeing He can never, at any time, give up any part of His work as a failure or a mistake, nor undo to-day the work that has been done on the yesterday. We can trust Him, for all His deeds are done in truth—according to that Infinite Truth, glimpses of which are shining out on us from imperishable work or written word day by day continually. We can trust Him, because the more we consider His doings, we see there is no confusion in His work, that all is made to conduce to the greatest and highest ends. Things do not shift or alter—the hand-writing on them is not indistinct or illegible; the testimony

they have to offer is of no dubious or variable sort. In nature or in providence all goes by an Eternal harmony, an order that is altogether sublime, unspeakable—and the solemn face of the universe is not ruffled by storms of chance, or disturbed by the exercise of any arbitrary, capricious will. And above all sits He who has called Himself our God, our Father; and all law but speaks forth a little of the harmony that lay from Eternity within the Almighty Mind, and declares to us a little of an endlessly beneficent will. For *His* supreme law is Love. We find, if we look more exactly at even the ordinary phenomena of the universe, that the purpose towards which all things tend is a good and not an evil purpose. And so far as we find any of the appearances of the world to be simple and not complex, so far as they stand out as having one single end to fulfil, and are not involved in any complicated net-work of causation, where they would be only conspiring forces amid a host of others—so far we can now clearly see that their object is purely good and beneficent. Thus, in dealing with the involved phenomena of human society, where there are millions of finite wills, all busily employed in working out their own designs, where many of the interests involved are different from, or opposed to, the rest, it may be more difficult at once to discover the general good that the whole is meant to serve. When we look at the thousand-fold vexations of human life and human society, we may be tempted to doubt the truth of an Infinite Benevolence presiding over all. And this is just because we are not capable of taking in the whole of the Divine plan in such matters. But take one of the simplest works of God, where the object is at once discernable, and we are at no loss. When the sun goes forth, as a bridegroom from his chamber, to run his daily race, to accomplish his daily work, and gladdens all hearts with his glory, and lights men to their labor, and sheds a quickening lightness over all earth and air, and all the summer flowers are opening themselves to drink in its light, we perceive at once that the will concerned in all this is a loving and gracious will. When we see the seed that we have put in the ground springing up according to that law by which it has been appointed to grow, gathering moisture and nourishment for itself from the falling shower or out of the brown soil; as we mark it, by one or another beautiful process, emerging into blade and ear and fruit, there can be no question as to the goodness that has ordained it *so*. Or when we observe that strange, instinctive fondness wherewith a mother watches over her helpless babe, how that marvellous maternal affection gets unfolded in her so as to make the concerns of that unconscious infant's existence dearer to her than her own—the whole heart pouring itself forth in great pulses of new love, and when we remember that all this is just as God has designed it to be, then also we come to understand that this affection we see on earth is but an effluence from His own Infinite Love, a faint, temporal type of what is Eternal, Unspeakable, in Him. And when, from these things, the purpose of which is clear to us, we turn us back to the contemplation of other, more complicated phenomena, the end of which is not, by any means, so apparent, we may still carry those conclusions regarding the beneficence of God with us even there. We are not to conclude Him harsh and

unfeeling, or the ordinary course of His providence heartless and cruel, just because we don't happen to understand the meaning of much that is taking place in the world. We are not to charge the faults of our own ignorance and short-sightedness against His moral character. We have enough to tell us that above all natural laws of God's providence the supreme, all-controlling principle is Love. Do you think that any laws of His can stand in the way of that tenderer feeling? Or don't you think, rather, that His laws are only necessary as a vehicle for carrying out His love, for bringing it into action, for leading it to its proper results? He could not embody His love in any fortuitous, hap-hazard manner of exercise. He could not express it merely in an infinite series of unconnected acts. He has appointed an Infinite, a Divine order, according to which it is to unfold, to develop itself. His laws, you say, are immutable, and sometimes they are hard and oppressive. His love also is immutable, and it is not the least hard or oppressive. The oppressiveness of law may be only in the seeming—the reality that underlies and supports *all* laws, of nature or providence, of whatever sort they be, is only Almighty, Infinite, Unchanging Mercy. Ah, friends! It is so of a truth. You know that you can trust to laws of nature—there is no fear of them failing and disappointing you, even though their operation may prove sometimes hard. You know that the sun of to-morrow will obey his law as certainly as he has done to-day, and whether he rise in undimmed glory in a sky without a cloud, or whether mists and gloom will hang over the dawn or shroud him from our sight the live-long day, he will still be there, doing his kindly work as he has done since the creation's earliest day, as he will do till the heavens are wrapped up like a scroll. You know that the eternal hills will send their peaks far up into heaven's blue, that the green rivers will flow, and the fresh breezes will fan our cheek as they have done of yore, and the flowers will bloom in winsomeness and beauty again when spring's sweet voice shall summon them, and the golden grain will hang its heavy ears over the smiling harvest fields as they have done from the beginning. You know that the gravitation force will drag every unsupported thing to the ground, and will keep the orbs of heaven, each in its several place, in the future as it has done in the past. These things are sure—no one with any reason in him can think of questioning these things. And the more we come to know of God and of His providence, and His purposes, the more shall we also know that His mercy is the surest thing of all—that those things we look upon as most established here may change or be destroyed—that *that* will never change. These shall perish, but He whose name is Love endureth for ever. Though the earth should wither and grow old, and drop out of the sky as a fruit that is fully ripe drops from the tree—though that garment of glory which covers the sun should be all worn to tatters, and be thrown aside as a cast-off vesture into some *lumber room* of creation, where it shall shine no more—still in this world, and in all present or future worlds, this one thing shall remain, true and indubitable for ever :—God is Love, and His mercy endureth for evermore.

I said, that in the ordinary events and phenomena of providence we have enough to convince us that the general order of things is beneficent and good, that God Himself is loving and kind. There may be evil and confusion in the world, introduced there from some other source than the will of God, of which we but dimly understand the nature. It is no part of my task to-night, to speak to you at any length, of how the evil got here. If you can imagine that any other explanation of it can be made than that which the Bible gives; if you can suppose it to have been any other than a devil's work, the doing not of God but of some great power of evil whose great business it is to fight, as he is able, against God and all that is godly, I have no time now to try to convince you to the contrary. But what I want to say to you is this: that the object of God in all His providences—of the general or of the special sort—is to fight against all evil, to destroy all the works of the Devil, to bring His own Eternal order out of all the confusions of sin and misery extant in the world, to restore the true and righteous balance of things in a creation where evil is ever doing its utmost to disturb the balance. If it be the Devil, as I must here take for granted, that is producing all bad and ungodly results, he is ever getting pulled back and brought into subjection with all his lawlessness, when he proudly claims the sovereignty of the world as his own—is ever getting warned that he, with his claims, is a liar from the beginning, that the world belongs to a different master from him and is governed on other principles than his hellish ones, that iniquity is not the order of things here, and must not be—that it is a direct breach of the true order. The stronger man is ever coming in upon this strong man armed, even where he was most secure, taking his armour and goods from him, and sending him forth into his waste places out of the house he calls his own but where he has no right to be. This was especially the meaning of that culminating event of all providence, that solution of the strange providential mystery, that centre of all natural and of all spiritual law—the coming of the Son of God into the world. Above all things it was His work to destroy all the works of the devil, and to make exhibition of the love of a Father. That advent took place certainly according to a Divine law—was, in fact, the one point towards which all law, of nature or of history, had been pointing from the beginning and is pointing now. And yet, too, it was the miracle of miracles, the one unspeakable sign and wonder, testifying of a God of mercy and sympathy towards all His creatures. Love and law alike centre in the cross of Christ—are both gathered up into perfect development there. There we see God at once as the unbending Lawgiver and as the All-merciful Father. And there, in consequence, we get light, the light of eternal blessedness, of eternal life—on all the darker things of providence, on all sorrow and pain and death. That light of life has dawned for us up out of the Holy Grave. In Christ we learn that, however hard and oppressive the operation of certain natural or providential laws may seem, there is still an infinite sympathy, an almighty grace around us amid all the griefs of time, that it is, not a tyrant's, but a Father's heart that is beating at the centre of all things. God is still allowing misery and woe to sweep over the world, just as He let them

sweep over His Only-Begotten in that time of His agony of old. But there is love towards a sinful and miserable world, nevertheless, in the Father's bosom, even as there was towards the Christ, when that sorrow that was unto death was rolling over His soul, and He had to struggle amid the devouring "billows of God," and to yield up the ghost in agony and shame. Hither, into this sanctuary of sorrow, we, too, with our bleeding hearts may go, and find healing and consolation here. Here we may lay down the burden of our pain and taste, with eased hearts, of that peace which passeth all understanding. And, mingled with that mystery of the blood-baptism of the Lord, our cup of life loses most of its bitterness: steeped in that miracle of suffering mercy, the pains of life and the gloomy terrors of Death grow bright to us in the light of the Fathers' face.

And now, how does all this bear upon our prayers? If the providence of God is ordered on such principles as those we have been looking at—if law—strict, absolute, unbending—on the one side, and Love—compassionate and gracious—on the other be both engaged in the government of the world, harmoniously conspiring to work out the designs of the same Almighty Providence, in what way does our praying, our seeking after communion with God and the bestowment of His blessings, stand related unto those two elements in the government of the world? We find, in fact, the same quality in prayer as we have found in Divine providence. If we find mercy and order, love and law, at first seemingly opposed, but both uniting to act in perfect harmony, in providence, so do we find in prayer a counterpart of these two things. We have, on the one side, a meek and entire self-surrender and resignation unto the Divine, the Absolute Will as the supreme power by which all things are controlled and governed: we have, on the other, an earnest and importunate appeal to the Divine Love for those special mercies which the believing soul has been taught to regard as the gift of a Father. "Thy will be done," lies ever at the root of all true prayer. The order of God's kingdom is not to be broken for us—it is to be maintained. Prayer is no setting up of my poor, frail, erring will in opposition to that of the Almighty God, not a mere desire to have my selfish will accomplished, whether His be done or no. It is not a trying to bend the Almighty from any purpose of His own, or to extort from an unwilling "Hearer of Prayer" some fancied good that He would rather withhold from me. The man who prays aright and in faith is he who knows that the Will of God is the right and true order of things, that things will go wrong and get into confusion if that is not done, and what he asks, therefore, starts even from this: "not my will, but Thine be done." The mind of the true, godly suppliant will first of all seek resignation for itself—will always feel, "What am I, to wish for anything of which God may not approve? My will can only be right so far as it is made conformable unto that Divine Will which is perfect righteousness. I wish, I pray for nothing contrary to the Divine Will. What I do pray for is only so far as it may be in accordance with the eternal purpose of God. I know that I may ask for what is wrong, that, left to myself, I might be just as selfish in my prayers as I am apt to

become in other things. Surrounded by all that is dark and uncertain here, I but dimly know what is best for me: that which I often reckon best might prove, if I got it, to be altogether bad for me. I have no wish, I *would* have none, gratified—I would have no prayer granted, if God does not see it would be best for me. I would have nothing done for me, which would be contrary to His Holy Will, that would make Him to whom I pray break any part of His own order. In all things “let the will of the Lord be done.”

But then, it may be asked,—I am myself tempted to ask, may I not just as well leave God to do what He knows to be best without any prayer to Him at all? If I am in need or trouble and feel my heart burdened and in perplexity, and would fain make my escape out of such evil circumstances, may I not as well make up my mind at once that it is inevitable and that I must bear it so long as God sees meet that it should last? It will be got over by-and-bye or perhaps it may not be got over, but what can I and my prayers avail in the matter? If God loves and cares for me, as you say, He will surely deliver me Himself without waiting for me to tell Him about it, if it be good that I should be delivered at all. Is God such a One that He will not help me till He hears my cry for help, that He will not do me any good unless first of all I come and bend the suppliant knee and sue and pray for grace? If He is so kind and merciful and has ordered the whole course of His providence according to the dictates of Infinite Benevolence, then may I not at once conclude that however sorely I may be suffering, however anxious or distressed I may be, things are after all very good, however much my reason rises up in fierce and vehement protest to declare them evil, and so take them therefore with as easy a mind as I can and ask for no deliverance at all? Or if the evil from which I suffer is not, as I feel sure it is not, good, if it is a wrong that needs to be righted, a confusion out of which order needs to be brought, have I not a title to expect that He who thus cares for me should set me free at once without waiting to have the blessing wrung out of Him by importunate prayers? My friends! If any of you are feeling thus, it is I who have now to remind you that there is an order in all God's dealings, that He does nothing but according to some law, some predestined harmony. But this mode of giving without any answer from the recipient, this putting of every one right without any expressed wish, any prayer before, any thanksgiving after, does not seem any marvellous display of order. God might, no doubt, do good to every one merely because He likes to do them good, whether they wished to have any good done to them or no, but there would be a want of harmony in this foreign to all right order. Before you can receive any good at the hands of a Heavenly Father, and as His gift, must there not be also a receptivity on your part, and is not the right utterance of such receptivity just prayer? Think how it is even in natural things. The space between this and the sun, the wise ones tell us, is all dark and cold, because, though it has the power of transmitting the sun's ray, it has no power of receiving or of retaining them. The barren sand and the scarred and weather-beaten rock get

none of the dew because, though the air above them may be as much charged with moisture as where the green grass is growing, or where the shrubs and trees are holding up their leaves and branches to heaven, there is nothing to attract, or make any use of the fertilizing moisture. And so, my friends, before we can receive anything as a true gift of God to us, we too must be in a state fitted for reception. We must be sensible of our need. We must feel the nature of our want. We must be brought to cry out for the blessing that we require. The common, ordinary gifts of providence,—food or clothing or what not, may be ours even if we do not pray for them, for our very position as creatures makes us receptive of these things, and God does watch over us, as He does over the sparrow or the raven or even the lily of the field. But these are not enough for us. There are needs peculiar to us as possessed of reason, of spirit, of immortality that food or clothing can't satisfy. There are deep distresses of heart or mind for which man has no help and but small consolation. There are depths of spiritual darkness in which we may be plunged, into whose loneliness and gloom nature can send no light. There is a hunger that is not to be fed with bread, a thirst that no drink found or brewed on earth can still, a nakedness for which no tailor on earth can provide the fitting garments. There are perplexities of life out of which we can see no way for ourselves;—fears and oppressions for which earth can furnish no alleviation. There is no help or guidance in ourselves nor in any fellow man. And by an instinctive feeling we cry up through all our gloom and distraction and confusion to a living God. Does He hear us or no? Is He able to answer, to aid us or no?—to give us the deliverance, the guidance we want or no? Is there not grace in Him to assist us in all our straits? May we not trust in His Infinite Love that He may, without interfering with any order at all, do all the good for us that we need? As His love is the foundation of all His law, may we not humbly trust that it is His will to give us the consolation or the strength or the salvation for which we sigh and cry out of all our waste and desolate places?

What I want to say to you,—what I wish you to give all earnest consideration to, is this: Amid all the laws that God has stamped on His universe and by which He rules the affairs of the world, there is also a law of prayer. There is a tendency to prayer in us: it would not be there, if there were not something answering to it among the controlling powers of the world, if God had not so ordered things in the world that prayer might be answered. In all that endless chain of causation by which the universe is bound together, some of the links of which we can trace, some of which we cannot trace, why may we not reckon this also, of prayer and prayer's answer? We may not be able to mark the connexion between our feeble cries on earth and the blessing that comes down from above. But that does not prove that the connexion does not exist. In natural things we are at an equal loss. Why should my will move any part of the body? Why should those spots on the sun exercise, as the knowing ones tell us they do, such a marked effect on the health of human society? Our want of perception proves no more

than that we are short sighted and frail. If when we cry to God we feel ourselves in consequence stronger to endure, wiser to understand, or more courageous for work, we need not trouble ourselves overmuch to give any philosophic account of the process of causation in the business. And we have this one fact to give account of—a fact which, to judge from the general order of nature, must have its counterpart somewhere else, that in all men there is this strange feeling of worship, this instinctive tendency to prayer. That was not given us for nothing. Evidently it was given us that we might see that an answer to prayer was not only possible, but natural, that is, in general agreement with the ordinary course of Divine Providence. Provision, in fact, in that as in other things, has been made to supply the want of the human mind. God from the beginning has arranged His natural and providential laws so that this law also should admit of fulfilment, and an answer to prayer, conveying those spiritual blessings for which especially prayer is to be offered should follow the petitions that are presented before a “Throne of Grace.” And when, therefore, we are asked if everything would not take place in exactly the same manner, supposing no prayer should be offered at all, we may unhesitatingly say,—no. Just as things in the creation would not be the same, if the sun were shining as brilliantly as now, and the showers falling, and the soil the same, but no faculty for growth in the seed ; or just as things would be in danger in the household of becoming different if a father's care and a mother's love were even as they are now, but there were no power on the part of the child, of expressing its feelings of want, of pain or hunger ; so, we may also say, things would not be just the same here if the human spirit had not the power of expressing its wants and feelings unto an Almighty God, or if it were not using that power. Where prayer is, then things do become different. The mind of the suppliant himself would not have been in the same state but for the humble and confiding prayers he has offered. If, as we are justified in believing, the blessing bestowed and the supplication before, hang together by an Eternal pre-arrangement, the one could not have been there without the other. For, as I said before, we do not by our prayers turn the mind of the Father to some new thing He has not thought of before, which He had no thought of giving before, but that “Heavenly Father knew what things we had need of before we asked Him,”—only the spirit that prompted the asking needed to be in us before we were ready for receiving, for using the Paternal gift.

It may be also that the discovery of new laws of nature or providence may raise us above the necessity of praying for certain things for which we pray now, and may introduce a perfect trust in a Divine order in certain departments of our life, instead of those petitions for special blessings which are the present expression of our faith. Prayer is the utterance of a want in cases in which we find ourselves ignorant or helpless, in which we feel that there is no other help known to us save in God Himself. We can conceive of the first man, when he for the first time saw the sun setting down in the west, and the darkness which

seemed so lonely, unfriendly and intolerable, closing round him, praying earnestly that that calamity, for which he knew as yet of no remedy, might be averted from him. When he came to understand the order of the sun's return, the law of the sun's shining, he would need to utter such a prayer no more. We still ask occasionally for such weather,—rain or sunshine, as may be good for the supply of certain of our wants. It is quite possible that one day we shall know so well the laws that regulate the weather, and shall be so sure of the wise and well-ordered return of sunshine or of rain as that such a petition shall be unneeded, and in our clearer knowledge of the Divine providence we shall be raised above the necessity of prayer. It is not so yet, and therefore there is no irreverence in our asking when we feel ourselves unable to aid ourselves otherwise. But in all things that pertain to the wants of the Spirit, when we feel ourselves perplexed, liable to error, tempted to fall into sin, prayer must ever be our resource. In this way, more especially with our merciful and faithful High Priest to trust to, we may be ever sure of finding rest for all our weariness, comfort for all our sorrow, guidance in difficulty, strength in all weakness, forgiveness for all sin, in Him from whom such blessings flow. By prayer we are ever able to speak into the ears of a Heavenly Father as knowing that He heareth us, and have our souls raised above the dust and din and distractions of earth in consequence, and are able to realise the life of God, of Christ as living within ourselves. By this means we obtain pardon for all the past and grace to meet the trials and temptations of the future, grace to fit us for the duties and the sorrows of the world, to prepare us for the glories of Heaven.

Ah, friends! Is it anything more than right and fair, after what has been said, and before we separate to-night, that I should admonish you that the one way of developing all true spiritual life in you, of getting to become all that you ought to be, is by the exercise of prayer? In this way, you will get the life and light of God informed within your weakness and darkness. Your every day life will grow bright with new glory, surrounded with new and loftier meanings. You will feel yourselves no longer isolated, lonely, in a world which, notwithstanding all its confusions and sins is still the Father's world,—but bound up with God Himself, who is the source of all life and of all blessedness. Be ye therefore instant in prayer. Pray ye when life's path seems beset with perplexity or leading on into danger or darkness, and your prayers shall make you become "light in the Lord." Pray when sorrow fills the heart, when tears bedew the eye, and all the tide of trouble is rolling its stormy waves across the soul,—when your burden is heavy and painful and there seems but small chance of relief;—and out of the Heavenly Places the comfort that earth cannot supply shall rain down upon you and the spirit of grace shall support your fainting minds. Or when the sense of sin and shortcoming distresses you, when you feel that you have not been using God's gift of life aright, and all the marvellous powers with which He endowed you seem to be lying in wreck and confusion behind you, and you long to be put right again, but can see no way of

getting to be right ;—pray then to the Father in Heaven,—pray in the name of Him who died for sin, and your sins shall be forgiven you. While ye live, seek for God's aid by constant supplication. And when time begins to recede from your view, and the cords that bound you to life are getting unloosened one by one, and the days that are allotted you here are getting fewer and fewer, and death is at the door, then this too shall be your confidence. He to whom you gave yourselves in life shall be with you, listening to your feeble prayer in death, guiding you amid all the darkness of that last journey, upholding you in the fierceness and the weariness of that last conflict, increasing you, as the outward man perisheth, with all might in the inner man, taking you over with Himself across that dark valley with its cold and cheerless river into the glories of His own Eternal Home.—AMEN.

LECTURE VII.

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY.

2 TIM. I., 10.—“God is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished Death, and brought Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel.”

THE question regarding the duration of human life, whether it finally ends in death, or whether it is prolonged into immortality, is surely one of the most unspeakable moment to us. It is one which has much engaged the attention of modern thinkers of all classes and creeds, of every shade of believing or of non-believing opinion. What is quite as much to the purpose, it is one that is mixing itself, and will ever mix itself, to a large extent, with the ordinary thoughts and feelings of working men and women. A subject this,—whatever else does not, that meets us everywhere and always, that presses in upon us, often most unwelcomely, in the midst of our daily concerns;—that stands fronting us in its solemn awfulness when sickness or pain falls upon us, that speaks out so solemnly to us from every bed where loved ones are dying, that cannot but be very earnestly pondered by us as we go to visit the place where we have laid the dead. We are here in the world for a few days or years. We have come we cannot well tell whence—are going, who shall say whither? Around us the solemn mysteries of life and death are glooming down upon us in this doubtful twilight of existence. We float here for a little while on the troubled surface of this great ocean of visible things, as part of the strange phenomena there, and then we too sink out of sight and disappear as they all must, and our place knows us no more and we have fellowship with living things and living men upon the earth no more, but darkness covers us over, and the silence that cannot be broken hushes our voice for ever here, and the frame that thrilled with delight or that trembled with pain and sorrow lies lifeless, cold and low, and the eye that sparkled with gladness or grew dim with tears gets withered into brown dust, and the worm feeds on the strong right hand that was so rich in cunning, on the brain that was so fertile of device, on the heart that loved or grieved so intensely:—ashes return to ashes, dust must go back to dust. And is that the end of us? When the living body has grown cold and dead, when breath,

and thought, and will, have departed from the now loathsome corpse, when what is mortal of us has been laid in the grave, and the sun is shining, and the flowers are blowing, and the birds are singing over that narrow home out of which we do not come any more, are we ourselves existing no longer? Throughout all the universe of God is there nothing yet left that answers to our name, that is conscious still of a life that has been lived on earth, that has now been taken out of the earth? Dead to all things here, to those who were dearest to us and to whom we were so dear, have we become absolutely, everlastingly dead? Or is it possible that we are not then utterly dead? Is it possible that we are to live on in other states of being,—that a final end has not come to those personalities of ours,—that, though invisible any longer on earth there may be still some other mode of existence, not the same as that in which we lived here but different from that, in which we shall have to live on—in which, in altered circumstances and under strange new conditions, we shall be set to continue the life that we have spent in the flesh?

Or again: when we think of those who have been taken from us, who had companied with us for awhile amid the joys and griefs of this pilgrimage of the flesh, who had helped to cheer our loneliness or to ease our sorrow or to encourage our hopes,—who had made life's burden less heavy by lending their aid to carry it along with us or who had made life's cup taste less bitter by mixing it with the freshness and the healthiness of their own spirits:—when we think of their light as quite gone out for us, and remember that now they have gone from us by that gloomy path by which no one is allowed to return,—that path on which we could give them no convoy, at the painful entrance of which we could only bid them a sad and tearful farewell, how utterly dark and melancholy, if we have no hope of immortality brightening before us, do our memories of the dead become? Yonder behind us on this journey of life, lie the white tombs of those whom we have lost and mourned for, receding further and further away from us as life with all its stormy cares, hurries us onward,—standing as mementoes of a pleasanter, gladder life that was ours ere they were reared, a life that is not to be ours again,—marking out for us how far we have had to travel on in our loneliness and desolation since those bright, beloved spirits were summoned away. Up through the chill and gloomy air of time we cry to silent heavens above us to know if the dead are utterly and for ever lost to us, if all that worth and kindness of heart and earnestness in virtue have become things that are not—things that can be no more. Is it possible that the whole of that glad dream is to be nothing more than a memory for us now? Was there not something prophetic as well, laid down in that honoured grave? Was the whole of that marvellous intercourse with the now buried dead a dream only whose vain shadows mocked us in the night for a little, but for which, in this cold winter's morn of our awaking, there is now no corresponding reality? Are our poor, grievful remembrances of the departed all that remains to tell us that God had made them once so amiable and so worthy? Or are we not

also able, in our mournful memories of some one loved and lost, to pray amid all our doubts and sorrows :—

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature whom I found so fair :
I trust he lives in Thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved ?

Such thoughts must rise up in the hearts of all men, whether they are living in the faith of One who has abolished Death and made Immortality clear or no. Men in all ages, men of all, even the most debased religions, have had them presented to their minds, and in one way or other have tried to get relief for their souls from such disquieting questions. The natural mind would fain have some light for itself here, where all is so dark. Cries after the light have gone up everywhere and at all times out of this poor obscured earth,—out of hearts that could find no rest or assurance for themselves, and the light they have got by any available process has been ever of the dimmest, most unsatisfactory sort. There was something within them,—they did not know whence or how it had got there—that bore witness to them that immortality was a great and awful truth. But there were doubts also rising up in them, that could not easily be gainsaid or overcome, which made that truth very difficult of belief. They had no actual knowledge and felt they could have none on this subject, regarding which it seemed so essential that they should get something to know. However painful, hateful the darkness might be to them, their prayer for light seemed to bring no satisfying answer. And even yet, my friends, there are souls in Christian lands pining away in the sickness of doubt and fear in reference to this solemn mystery of Immortality. For unspeakable gloom and the shadow of death seem to hang over it, and the veil is so thick that no light can be seen through it, so heavy that no man can draw it back. What are we to think, what are we to make, of it ? Sometimes immortality seems so entirely a thing to be desired and longed for. To make escape into a serener life and a brighter world :—when I “have shuffled off this mortal coil,” to shuffle off along with it at once all the cares that have harassed and the sorrows that have vexed me ; to walk, not in pain and the dark any more, but in Eternal light, in immortal peace ; to have done, once and for ever with want and weariness and woe, and to enter upon perfect rest and endless blessedness :—all this surely can seem no other than a bright and cheering prospect to the soul, a thing to be desired with the whole heart, to be striven for amid all the confusions and perplexities that are here, with all earnestness and energy. And this hope brightens in us sometimes into something like a *consciousness* of immortality. We feel sure that there is something in us which was not made merely to die and be lost for ever, which needs, for its right solution, the continuance of life after this life in the flesh and in the world is over. We cannot resist the conviction that death, whatever it may mean, does not and cannot mean, an utter cessation of being for us.

But it may be that in darker, stormier hours of our experience, if the soul be wandering only in its own conceits and enjoying no higher light, fierce and terrible doubts begin to assail us, and immortality begins to look no longer the desirable thing it appeared before, and it almost seems as if it were better to perish utterly and pass away into annihilation and absolute non-existence. Immortality! What have I got to do with immortality? What assurance have I that that is mine? What good use could I make of it even if it were? Life,—this present life is so full of bitterness, grief and care, the path is so rugged and thorny, the burden is so heavy and intolerable, that it seems almost best, when I have done with it, that I should have nothing more of the like at all. Existence has not proved itself such a very pleasant thing that I should care much about an Eternity of it. If I *am* to live on after death, what assurance have I that life then shall be any better than it is now, that it shall be even so good as it is now?—that troubles more terrible than any I have known, and griefs more unbearable and pains more unspeakable shall not be mine? Here, even though I may be vexed with the cares and the vanity of seen and temporal things, I can also contrive to extract something that is more grateful and pleasurable from the mingled cup. There are rosebuds as well as thorns to be gathered out of this present life of mine. There are joys to be drained out of life's flowing goblet, and though sorrow may lie at the bottom, am I to fret like a spoilt child for that? But in that other life, I know nothing of how all that may be. I might only have all the pain and none of the alleviation, the bare sting without any of the honey, the woe without any of its counterbalancing gladness. Just possible, all that! My life may not have been all it ought to, or what it might, have been. I am not free from blame, not pure from guilt. It may be that the confusion and waste of my present life might make of that future life a thing only of bitterness and woe. Your principle of immortality does not seem by any means so very desirable to me. I would rather, when I get rid of this life in the flesh, have done with existence altogether as nothing better than a mistake and a delusion. And so, this sort of despairing wish having become father to the thought, there are many who are led to give up the belief of immortality altogether;—to whom the idea has become intolerable and who are fain therefore to persuade themselves, the best they can, that the thing is a dream or an absurdity, a notion begotten in some foolish brain or a tenet so fraught with difficulty as to be wholly unbelievable.

My friends! I shall not deny that the subject is fraught with difficulty,—with many difficulties which the natural mind, the soul of man by itself, may find itself very unable to grapple with. I believe that modern sceptical thinkers have quite unwittingly done a great service to the church of Christ in our times in this very respect. They have driven us to realise more than ever before the whole extent of our obligation to the gospel of Christ Jesus. They have done much to lessen the force of the ordinary *natural* arguments for what is called “the immortality of the soul.” They have forced us to feel that this

belief only in the *soul's* immortality is somewhat one-sided and unsatisfactory, that if immortality be true, it is not as a mere soulish thing that it can do us good,—that it is not a thing to be convincingly demonstrated by mere force of logic or arguments drawn from the soul itself;—that whatever presumptions, from “analogy” or elsewhere, can be brought to bear upon the subject, they are presumptions only and not proof. They have reminded us of what we ought never to have forgotten, that nature can give us no certainty, no knowledge, in any such matters. They have stated the doubts that hang over this doctrine of immortality with such boldness and distinctness that it is not so easy to turn their edge or to deny their power. They have sternly called in question statements that used to pass current as very substantial arguments for immortality, and which had been taken for granted as facts that admitted of no dispute. They have made light of those desires and cravings of the human heart, which point us forward to another and brighter world and life than these, as the vain dreams of the disturbed fancy of men who were not content with what had fallen to their share in this world of sin and suffering, and who wanted to have a chance for something higher and better in another;—as the foolish imaginations of those who did not know in their weakness, what to do with this present existence, and who, in their despair of rectifying that, have had recourse to the rather cowardly subterfuge of inventing another for themselves, where, in a sort of dreamy *lubberland* they would get all their goods without working or paying for them, where they might be as lazy as they pleased, and would not need to pine and struggle as they must do here, but would have an Eternal leisure to enjoy themselves in pleasures to which they had no title, in rest for which they had not worked. Those unbelieving thinkers have driven us, as men had been never driven before, to search down to the very foundations of this faith in immortality. They have forced upon us this question, which at least we cannot avoid,—whether we are safe in trusting to mere natural intimations of immortality, or whether we do not, in this as in other things, need the light of revelation to tell us what our present life is, what our future one is to be.

And in so doing, I am not sure but that they have done us a service for which we ought to be grateful. Hopes of immortality that are so flattering to humanity are only too apt to be adopted without any adequate investigation, or to be taken for granted without any investigation at all. Men have been always too ready just to imagine that whatever this life has been for them, however foolish or sinful a thing they themselves have made of their lives, however unworthy they may have shewn themselves of having been put in charge of all the solemn responsibilities even of this present existence, all was to become right and bright and glorious for them afterwards. And thus they have been ever prepared to grasp at anything, however feeble, that gave them even the shadow of an argument for what they had taught themselves to look upon as so desirable. It was needful that we should know how weak and incompetent nature or reason is as a teacher to guide us to any

true or trustworthy solution of such difficult problems,—how dimly human reason or the soul, by its own strength, is able to apprehend such a high truth as that of immortality,—how necessary it is even here to have the light of God's revelation to enlighten us. When we have the school of Hegel, at least in its later developments, in Germany,—the school of Comte in France, and plenty of teachers in Britain and America all declaring to us that the immortality of the individual is a vain dream, an empty, mocking delusion, and that it is only the race that lives on ;—when we have not a few of the philosophic heads of these times, with their materialistic or Pantheistic doctrines, shouting out to us, in the most various dialects, that death puts an end to the individual life always and absolutely, and bringing their logical and scientific ability to make that dismal dogma clear to us, it is time that we should be enquiring for ourselves what reason we have for the hope that is in us, what light we have to carry into these gloomy places,—whether it is necessary at once to give up all further thought of immortality, or what grounds we have for still retaining our trust in that. We may be quite sure, in these days, that if we have this faith in us, it shall not be allowed to pass unquestioned. We must be ready to give an answer to all gainsayers about it. Our answer must, if possible, be something fit to stand the severe tests to which modern thinking may put it. Presumptive evidence, reasonings from analogy and so forth may be allowed to pass as analogies or presumptions only, but you may be quite sure that the sharp eye of modern criticism will see flaws and faults enough in them, and will not accept them at our hands as certain or infallible demonstration.

The question, as it presents itself to the consideration of thinkers for the most part, is regarding the immortality of *the soul*. I believe, as we shall see as we go on, that the question that is presented to us by the Bible and that is answered for us in the Bible, is not *merely* about an immortality of the soul. It is not that alone that the Bible speaks of in any passage known to me, but the immortality of man as man, without any distinction of body, soul or spirit. In the Scriptures, it is, as all things there are, far more a spiritual than a soulish thing, and is good, spiritually, for the whole man. But whatever the question in the Bible may be, in the schools it is only a question of immortality for the soul. And one of the leading arguments for the doctrine is drawn from the nature of soul as an essence that is distinct from the body, incorporeal, immaterial, of altogether different composition from the body, not dissoluble and therefore not subject to death, as the body is. The body, it is said, is composed of separate particles, each of which exists for a longer or shorter period in it, and then is driven, by one process or another, out of it again, and becomes altogether dissociated from the rest. Now none of those atoms of matter perish. They may cease to exist in the body : they do not cease to exist elsewhere. When we die, and the dissolution of particles in the frame is complete, each several atom goes to be taken up in other forms of existence. One may become the food of a worm, and exist for a while as a living thing

in that lower connexion. Another may lie inert and dead in the brown earth. One may go to sustain the life of the flower that blooms, of the grass that grows green above our grave. We may not be able to trace the history of each several particle, but we know that each one still exists and cannot cease to exist. The body dies because it is composed of those atoms which cannot always exist together, though not one of them ever returns to annihilation. But the soul is not made up of particles: it is not a congeries of atoms of matter. It is as indivisible as the ultimate atom of matter itself is. The soul in its unity of structure, corresponds to the material particle, which, in whatever different connexions it may be found, can never cease to be. And therefore are we not fairly entitled to conclude that it too, being a bare unit, and besides, an immaterial unit, not composite but simple in its essence, is a thing that can never die. Such, with abundant variations, has been a common, favourite argument for the soul's immortality, and may pass, with those who like, for what it is worth. Let any one who will, try to get all possible benefit from it. At the same time, to any one who searches more deeply into the matter, it must appear to be rather a slender foundation on which to build *Eternal* hopes. The nature, neither of the body, nor of the soul, is so very clear to us that we can found very much upon their difference. The body itself is not to be judged of merely as a collection of particles; it is something else than that, we feel conscious, that constitutes the body. There is a unity also of body that is not to be explained by the mere curious collocation of material atoms. There is a life in the body that depends upon the connexion of these atoms, but is not just it, and in death that life departs. The soul again exists in connexion with this material organism which is made up of all those particles, just as the bodily *life* does, and is, as I told you before, wholly dependent for its knowledge upon that material organism. The soul begins to be with the body and had no existence that we know of prior to that, and is in that respect wholly different from those indivisible atoms of matter which may be found in these frames of ours, which certainly did not *begin* to be when they first came inside our skins. And why should not that which has thus begun to be not also cease to be? The analogy of the soul and the ultimate atom of matter can therefore throw but small light on this mystery of immortality. The soul grows with the body, becomes stronger, waxes greater as the body does, and is affected by pain, weakened by sickness, depressed by disease, as the body is. The faculties of it get blunted and worn, and as old age oppresses the frame and obscures the brain, so does the soul also get feebler in its functions and can no longer think and reason with the same clearness and vigour. As the body, though the particles that compose it were all in existence before, did itself begin to be; as it was new when it came into the world, though its component atoms were not, and as it so far as we can trace it, ceases to be, though the particles of it do not:—so is there not room left for the dark suspicion that, as the soul has begun to be with the body, it must share also the fate of the body, when this life in the

flesh is over? What reason have we to ascribe to the soul that which we reckon, rightly or wrongly, to be untrue of the body? Body and soul form here one whole—one living person. What right have we to go and split up our being thus, and fancy that there is a different destiny for each of the two parts?

And again: it has, from the days of heathen Cicero downwards, been a common argument in favour of the immortality of the soul, that all men have held some such belief. The *consensus gentium*,—the agreement of all nations in entertaining such a hope, their general expectation of a future life after this present one, ought to convince us that such a widely-spread belief must have something in it, must rest on some sure foundation. But, it is very seriously asked of us now-a-days, has this "consent of the nations" been at all so very harmonious as men have been only too ready to suppose? Do we actually find, when we enquire into the facts of the case, that all the peoples of the world have been agreeing from the first in this one point, on whatever multitude of others they may have differed? When we begin to enter into the history of the human mind, and enquire of the nations themselves what their faiths and hopes in this respect have been, we find at the best but a dubious answer. We find millions of our fellow men who have no belief in a separate, personal immortality, to whom that idea has grown utterly intolerable, whose one great religious desire is utterly to have done with their personality when this life is done. The only idea of the Buddhist in reference to the future is that of being absorbed into what is almost equivalent to Eternal nothingness and losing everything like personal consciousness or a separate existence. The only idea of the follower of Confucius is that of living in the grateful memories of those who are left behind. And in nations that have entertained the idea of personal immortality, has it not been far more a thing of the body than of the soul? Among our German forefathers, the hero who had fought bravely on earth was to be allowed,—in that *Walhalla* of the brave to which he was to go,—on more valiant fields than those of earth to fight the live-long day, and to drink the mead of a blissfuller world at night. And among other nations as well the testimony is dim, dubious, uncertain. So that the question remains, after all our searchings on this field, very much where and what it was. Men who had no certain light of revelation as a guide to them, have found themselves all in the dark in reference to such high matters, and have been able to come to no certainty as to what was to become of them after the shades of death had fallen down over those poor, narrow lives of theirs.

And with almost all your natural arguments for the soul's immortality, it fares no better in the hands of those who question the doctrine. So soon as it becomes a thing of mere argument and logical fence, to be determined by dialectic formulas and inference, the mind gets bewildered among a multitude of torturing questions, of vexing doubts. For, after all, the question, as it presents itself to the logical mind, as it is debated in the schools, is a purely negative one; and you know that it is rather hard

to prove a negation. The tenet, as propounded for the consideration of philosophy, is that the soul does *not* die, though the body does, and how is it possible for any one absolutely to demonstrate that? We may have a greater or less amount of probability;—analogies that go to shew that the thing is not quite incredible;—our shrewd guesses, in fact, that may look more or less truth-like. We may feel that there is that in us which is utterly inexplicable, if we are not to believe in a future life that is to fulfil what is lacking, and to put right what is wrong in this one. We may feel that man, as a moral and responsible being, must be called upon to give some account hereafter of the life he is spending here, and must get the due recompense for all his doings in the world. A thousand thoughts and feelings may rise upon us, going all to make it likely, or somewhat more than likely that the soul does not die in death: and when we add up the sum of them, we may be right enough in concluding, that in this balancing of probabilities, the advantage is considerably on the side of immortality. Though on the other side we hear of the pantheistic schools telling us that it is only the universal spirit, the absolute, that is eternal, that the individual is necessarily perishable and that our fate at death is only again to be merged in the absolute;—though M. Comte and other Chinese-European teachers assure us that the only sort of immortality we can ever enjoy is that poor—to us very useless one of living for a while in the minds and memories of those we leave behind us;—though materialism shrieks in our ears its sad, despairful dogma, and tells us that the soul, as we call it, is but the light which can burn so long as the matter which feeds it is there, but which must go out into utter and eternal darkness so soon as the matter is exhausted, and informs us, for our edification, that at death the phosphorus has all burnt out in the brain, or that the pineal gland has got so fretted and worn that it can evolve thought no more and, therefore that the soul dies: yet we may find, even on natural grounds, that there is not a little to help us to cling to the doctrine of a separate and personal immortality. But I want to say to you that positive proof of immortality on merely natural grounds is not at all attainable by us, that we must always rest a great way short of actual proof by mere natural arguments,—that apart from the revelation in the person of Him who is the Eternal Life of men, certainty on the subject of immortality is not possible for us or for any man. There is nothing I am more fully persuaded of than that. No one who has attended, with any earnestness, to the progress of modern sceptical thought will be inclined to doubt that. So far as the question lies between natural religion and sceptical philosophy, it comes to a mere balancing of chances between them, so many chances in the one scale, so many put in the other, and according as a man is naturally given to doubt or inclined to religion, he will be ready to give his vote in favor of the one or the other. There is no absolute certainty. We wander among dim, unsubstantial night-shadows when we look only to the speculations of the human soul about its own freedom from death. There are, no doubt, intimations of immortality within us, or whispering around us; but where all is so hazy and unreal, where doubts and confusions are so manifold, where mysteries

unfathomable frown above and about us, who is to assure us that those intimations are utterly trustworthy? There are dawns, as it were, of an undying existence within us;—but are they the faint morning light of an Eternal Day, bursting through all the glooms and shadows of this night of time, or are they, perchance, but the dim glimmer of some fantastic *auroral* light streaking the face of an everlasting night, playing its mad tricks before us, mocking us with vain promise, deluding us with its airy, phantasmal sport? There may be longings after a better life, after a more glorious world than this, where we shall not be the game of vanity nor subject to constant vexation, where doubt shall have been resolved in eternal truth, where all the darkness shall have given way to immortal light, and toils and cares shall have ended in perfect, everlasting rest. But how are we to know that these dreaming and desires of ours are founded on aught that is real? Ah, friends! we need something more than metaphysical speculation, analogical reasoning, presumptive proof and any multitude of fair *chances* to give us assurance in reference to a world unseen and a life on the other side of the grave. The probabilities may not be amiss, but we want to *be sure*. We should not like to be doomed to trust to mere speculation in a matter of such terrible moment as that of our personal immortality.

But let us turn now to what the Gospel of Christ has got to say to us in reference to this solemn subject. Let us turn especially to the bold and noble words which St. Paul has written for us in the verse I have taken as the text. Christ has brought those things—life and immortality, which would otherwise have still lain much in the dark for us—to light by the Gospel. He has brought to certainty what would otherwise have been still encompassed with mystery and doubt. He has actually abolished Death, taken the sting out of *him*, all the might and power away from him. Death *reigned* before He came. There was nothing to tell us with any certainty that Death's rule was not final, eternal. He kept the human race subject to bondage; there was no one to deliver man from that bitter sway. Men might rebel or repine and murmur that theirs was a cruel lot, and protest that they were there for something better than just to die as the one supreme thing in their existences. They might drag that weary chain that bound them to its utmost length, and then stretch out their longing arms painfully to what was unseen and unknown beyond them, and dream of the freedom of an immortal life. But evermore Death's chain grew tighter on them, and drew them back to the feeling of their loneliness, their mortality, their helplessness. In the midst of life they were in Death. In a few days or years life was to be over and they were to be away—to go hence and be no more. And their vision, dimmed through the gloomy night-fogs of time, could see no further. What lay beyond was conjecture mainly, brooded over by Eternal silence and the dark which no human eye can pierce. In the coming of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, the dark has become light. Life now has become a different thing since the revelation of an Eternal Life has been made in it. Death has been abolished, has been taught that he is of the devil and not of God, and is not the Supreme Governor here by any means. Bare

standing-room is still allowed him in the world, but now there is a mightier than he, to whom all eyes may turn in hope and joy. We needed a *revelation* of immortality, and it has been made to us. And not the revelation merely of a negative thing, not the simple authoritative declaration that the soul is not to die,—which, after all, would have left a thousand questions unsettled, and a multitude of doubts unremoved—but of a positive thing, of an Eternal Life, a life in Eternity and in God, a life that is not only a future thing for the soul, but a very present thing for the whole man. Christ has caused us to see that the secret of immortality lies, not in vain speculations or clever reasonings, but in union to Himself as the Eternal Life. He has fathomed for us the Divine mystery of Life: He has made clear to us the Divine principle of immortality.

You will observe, not perhaps without wonder, that our Apostle does not speak only, and does not even speak first of immortality;—that he speaks first of life as a thing that also needed to be illumined for us—that has actually been brought to light through the gospel of Christ Jesus. The Apostle cannot look on immortality as a thing to be judged of and settled by itself, or to be discussed apart from its relation unto life as it now is or may be. The Lord had not come merely to throw light on the one without also investing the other with new meaning, without surrounding it also with a new glory. And, indeed, if we look at the whole subject, we shall find that, however much philosophers may reason about the one apart from the other, the question, as it presents itself to plain, practical, toiling men and women who cannot deal in metaphysical abstractions or indulge in speculative research, naturally embraces both things as most closely interwoven with each other. The mere enquiry whether the soul,—the thinking principle is to die or not to die is a good one enough to chop logic on, but in its bare abstract character, it does not commend itself to the work-worn, anxious man, hemmed in by all the cares and vexations of this present life. The question becomes more practical with him. It is the life that he now has, that he is often at such a great loss to know what to do with, which he so often and painfully feels it difficult to guide aright, which gives him such a burden to bear,—such a battle to fight:—it is that which is the first thing he needs to have some light upon. The question of a future life cannot, he is sure, be properly adjusted, except in connexion with the present one. He cannot but feel that immortality, whatever it does mean, cannot possibly mean a new life, different from this present one; it must mean simply the extension, the continuance of this one. It may have to move in a different sphere after death: it may be surrounded by quite other circumstances. We may then occupy a new place and stand in hitherto unknown relations to other beings or things. But it must be the same and not another;—with the same feelings and faculties, the same powers to animate it, with more or less of the same principles to guide it. And hence heathens, whose minds have not got quite dark to the truth of immortality, have ever imagined it to themselves as a sort of glorification of the special sort of life they themselves were leading. Immor-

ality was just to be the best *idea* they could form of life coming true, getting *realised*. We saw already how the sons and worshippers of Odin, who knew of nothing higher and nobler than the warrior's life, pictured to themselves the blissful, future existence as only a fighting life over again in improved circumstances. The savage Redmen of the American prairies who spend most of their time in hunting fancy, as their ideal of future bliss, fields where the game is never scanty and the hunter shall never return to the *wig-wam* empty handed, where he shall hunt the deer all the long day, and never be unfit for the chase. The souls who had gone down to *Hades* among the Greeks were held to be occupied with the same cares, thinking out the same thoughts as those which had occupied them on earth. To all men, who have not just got some philosophic or other dogma to maintain, the future life will ever appear only as the continuation of the present, not a new or different thing, but the same. And on this very ground the gospel of Christ is fitted to commend itself to the minds of men, just because it is first of all a revelation of life. It claims this present existence as also God's and having an Eternal meaning in it. It discloses to those who believe it, the Eternal realities in which, amid all the vain and unreal things of earth, we are to live and move and have our being. It gives us an Eternal Life—a life that has not the slightest fellowship with death, that does not know anything about death, that is present in us now and is not merely to come into us when we die. It bridges over the gulf that separates the present from the future, the seen from the unseen, the finite and temporal from the Infinite and Eternal, and makes of these diverse things *one*. It does not tell us that we have to *wait* for immortality, or say that it is only when the last sharp pang of life is over and death has sealed the eyes and laid waste the fleshly tabernacle that the soul can escape into the freedom of an immortal life. It does not even teach us to make any unnatural separation between body and soul or to regard the one as possessed of a blissful heritage in the future which the other is not to share. It teaches us to care for the body as also God's gift to us, as destined to a participation in all Eternal, Immortal things. *It*, too, by God's grace, gets to have something Eternal in it, and will follow the Lord's glorified body in within Heavenly and Eternal places and continue its work amid the glories of immortality. Christ's gospel tells us that Eternal Life becomes our's through union to the Son of God, through *faith, now*;—becomes ours, not as a thing of the soul so much as a thing of the spirit;—that by the union of a regenerate humanity in us unto Him who is the Lord of all life, we come to live already here in God and in Eternity. Shining down through all the time-shadows, not the least distraught by all the unreal and empty appearances,—the vague, unsubstantial phantoms of the world and visible things, it brings all who believe it into fellowship with what is Eternal and invisible. It says with no dubiety in its tone, with no hesitancy in its utterance "He that believeth on the Son of God shall never die: for he hath Eternal life abiding within himself."

From such statements of what the gospel has declared to us, you will see that we have in it a higher and more spiritual principle revealed to us than that imperfect one which is common to us and many of the heathen, of the immortality of the soul. A mere soulish immortality in fact was all that the heathen could rise to the conception of: it is not by any means all that Christ has brought to light for us. I want you to understand that the gospel has come proclaiming to all who will not reject it and try to do without the truths it discloses to us, the *Eternal life of man*,—a life in union with the Son of God and with the Father who sent Him. The Pantheists are right in telling us to think more of the Eternity of the Spirit than of the immortality of the soul,—right in reminding us that this is far more a thing of the spirit than of the soul. So it is. Only by leaving out the element of personality, by overlooking the fact that personality also is a spiritual thing, that these personalities of ours are fitted to become spiritual, they have got involved in a labyrinth of perplexity and doubt on which there is no cheerful light shining any more at all. And between the two—between the cold, dead dogma of immortality of the personal soul on the one side, and the more universal, Pantheistic principle of Eternity of the Absolute Spirit on the other, we have the doctrine of the gospel, which is altogether spiritual, and wholly connected with the Absolute, but which does not exclude the element of personality either,—the truth of an Eternal life revealed in the spirit of man, but good for body and soul as well. But perhaps you are ready to say that if I comprehend the whole of man as sharing in the gift of Eternal life, I am virtually preaching the immortality of the body as well as of the soul. And what, my friends, if I should? What if, in the name of the Lord Jesus, who is Saviour also of the body, I should claim also for the body a share in that immortality He has brought to light? What if I should venture to protest against that monopoly in Eternal things, which the soul, puffed up with its proud and vain speculations, arrogates to itself? What if, in the name of the body, which men are often found foolishly professing to despise, but which they cannot the least do without, I should dare to address the soul: "Thou art utterly helpless here without the aid I give thee, canst form no single thought if the brain be dead, canst form no conception of any external thing without the senses which belong to me. And when thou farest forth alone into another life, if that is the fate appointed thee, where no bodily sense shall tell thee of what is outside, and no brain shall form the thoughts that may lie undeveloped within thee, by what other power, of which as yet thou hast no cognizance, shalt thou be able, without me, to continue in the execution of all thy functions, the doing of all thy work?" What if I were to tell you that the life even of the body may not be utterly lost or spilt as water on the ground that cannot be gathered again, that the body as we are all conscious to ourselves in hours when we are not just bent on thinking out some theory about it, is something else than a mere accumulation of particles, which may all of them get dissolved, as more or fewer of them are getting dissolved every day of our lives? The true human body as it is in Christ now, such as it is to become in all who are like Him, is not a carnal but a spiritual thing.

The flesh does not express all that the body is, or is fitted to be. Judged after the carnal manner, by the mere particles that compose it, this is not the same body that I wore some ten years ago : there is no single particle of that old body now existing in me. Not one. And yet this is the same body still, in spite of all your physiology,—the very same in which I suffered that sharp sickness or did that fatiguing bit of work or sat in loving converse with the friend who is now no more all those years ago. And so it may be, as with the successive dissolution of particles in life, just the same with their simultaneous dissolution in death. The body, the living thing, may still have some existence, though the life does not any longer hold the particles together. There is a seed of immortality even in the body, a seed which, in the case of regenerate humanity at least, death only causes to begin to grow. "For it is sown" says St. Paul "a natural, a *soulish* body, it is raised a spiritual body." My friends ! I trust you will believe that I am doing something else than tickling your ears with groundless suppositions or questionable paradoxes. I am sure no one of us all ever thinks of a future life in which he may have to exist without imagining it to himself quite as much in a corporeal as in a soulish sense. The enjoyments which we are there taught to expect are connected with the use of bodily organs, senses, powers. There is to be the seeing eye, only beholding new objects that the shadows and mists of time prevented it from discerning before. There is to be the hearing ear, listening to heavenly voices, to angelic symphonies and sounds of rapture which are wholly inaudible in this world's rude roar. There is to be the foot to walk on those fields of bliss, the hand fitted for higher work than any it could accomplish here. These are not words spoken only to meet the feebleness of our comprehension. The body of the spiritual man is already holy ; it is by-and-bye to be glorified. Even in that strange intermediate state after death, the man of God knows that he shall have the spiritual body, if not in full flower and fruit, at least in the budding germ, in some unspeakable way bound up with that life in which he shall then be living. He knows that "when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, he has a building of God, a house not made with hands." He knows that a resurrection time is coming when the seed sown in corruption shall be raised in *incorruption*, when as a perfect man, body, soul, and spirit, with no flaw or imperfection about him he shall stand before the Almighty God and serve Him day and night in His holy temple above.

I had more to say to you, but, at the risk even of leaving some things I have said misunderstood, I must trespass upon your patience no more to-night. Enough has been said to shew you that this doctrine of immortality is not a mere empty tenet of the schools. It is essentially a spiritual truth, to be spiritually discerned, as other things of the Divine Spirit must be. We have considered, imperfectly enough, the testimony of the Apostle, that Christ has brought this thing to light for us. Whether we shall attend for ourselves unto the testimony of the word about Christ as our Eternal Life, and seek to realise in ourselves all that He has taught us of life and immortality :—whether, now that we have the light of the Cross and of the Gospel to dispel the solemn dark that overhangs the grave, we

shall seek to walk on in that light of Life Eternal, or whether we shall be content to walk on in our own natural darkness, with nothing better to cheer and enlighten us than such sparks of our own kindling as we can command, it is for ourselves to say. Of one thing I am sure—the man who believes the testimony of God's word in this matter may possess his soul in patience amid all the wranglings of rival doctors and of rival schools, and trouble himself the least in the world about pineal gland or cerebral phosphorus, sure that these and all other things will be right with him. His life is hid with Christ in God. It will take more than metaphysical talk, or pantheistic or materialistic dogmas to pluck it thence.—**AMEN.**

LECTURE VIII.

CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER RELIGIONS.

ROM. i., 21.—“When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

ACTS xvii., 23.—“Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you.”

I HAVE read these two passages, as tending to throw some light upon the subject which is to engage our attention to-night,—the relation, namely, between Christianity, as a Religion, and other—what we are accustomed to call heathen—Religions. In the one of them, St. Paul, writing to Christian men and women at Rome, tells us of the origin of heathenism and of heathen Religions—how men had had, at the first, some knowledge of the true God, but did not avail themselves of the knowledge which they possessed,—how they did not glorify Him above all as the Supreme, the only God whom they had at first known Him to be, but had gone and substituted foolish imaginations, notions about Him, formed in their own hearts for the knowledge which had come to them at first from a higher source, and had thus allowed the light that was in them to become darkness through the vanity and deceitfulness of their own human souls. In the other, the same Apostle, speaking in the ears of the most polished, most highly civilized nation of contemporary heathenism, tells those philosophic, and, in their own way, very religious men of Athens that they, who, according to their own confession, had been worshipping an Unknown God, had been in this way showing their need of something that all their own religion could not give them;—that they were requiring a light for themselves which was not to be found in the whole circle of that Athenian heathenism of theirs—a light which he, the Apostle of the Gentiles, was there to manifest unto them;—that they were dimly groping after a God whom they did not know, whom he had come to declare unto them. And you may be half inclined to think that these two sentences of St. Paul don't at all very well agree together, that they seem, rather, very much to contradict one another. In the one, the Apostle speaks of a knowledge of God, unattended with any right or godly worship as being the proper mark of heathenism; in the other, he seems to regard a worship that is not accompanied with knowledge, as being the mark, at least, of that Attic form of heathenism. In the one case, he says that men knew

and did not glorify; in the other, that men worshipped and did not know. Even so, my friends. I believe, the more we look into the matter, whatever seeming contradiction men who are inclined may pick up from the words and wear in their button-holes, if they like, as a small trophy of victory over the brave old Apostle—the more shall we find that the true solution of the whole matter lies just in these two sayings. Time was when men—all men, did actually know God, had ideas and thoughts in them about Him which had not grown up in themselves, but which had been put within them, which were not self-grown notions at all, but a distinct *knowledge* of what had been declared unto them. And they would not retain that knowledge, would not believe it, would not act on it. It grew a dark and foolish thing to them. They began to think that God could not just be what they had known Him to be, but something altogether different from that, something such as they themselves were imagining Him to be. They would not worship Him, therefore, according to the knowledge which they had had about Him: would only worship Him according to the vain notions they were forming about Him. And so they went on, and their imaginations grew more and more foolish, their worship more and more degraded and degrading, and the light grew dimmer and dimmer in those vain, stupid old hearts, and the darkness in them grew more intense and awful. *Know God!* How could they possibly have knowledge of Him? They had their imaginations about Him—every one of them had, probably, a different set of imaginations. But there was—they were beginning to think there could be—no actual knowledge of Him. If they worshipped Him at all, if, amid all the other “gods many and lords many” whom they tried to worship, there was still some slight reserve of worship kept for Him, could it be as anything else than the Unknown God? Knowledge of an unglorified God is, therefore, you see, the beginning, the starting-point of all false religions; and after, by speedier or slower degrees, they have about run their course, the dark and hopeless worship of a God who is unknown is the goal.

I am, therefore, to speak to you of one or two of the chief of those religions of men, and see how far this is true of them—to see also how far it is true that the religion of Jesus Christ declares anew that God that has been lost to heathenism—how far it reveals Him who had become *unknown*. Man is essentially, as I said to you before, a religious being, cannot maintain his manhood whole without religion any more than he can without food or drink, and if there is nothing else in that line available for him, he will fill his belly with any sort of religious prodigal's husks, which might have done well enough for unclean, unreasoning animals, but are not at all good for him. But, as we also saw before, what is very often told us in these modern days, is that religion is only a subjective thing, a growth of the human consciousness inventing systems of worship for itself, and trying, as it can, to live upon these. Everything that is religious in the history of the world is to be taken solely, we are told, as the natural, unaided development of the religious sense in man. All religions, therefore, of whatever sort they be, are but symbols, more or less expressive, of what is in man himself, of the fundamental feeling

in us, on which religious consciousness rests, from which that consciousness proceeds. For there is what we may call a religious sense in man. It has got its wants, its longings. To meet such wants, it figures a God to itself, invests Him with certain attributes, finds Him worthy of a certain sort and of a certain amount of worship, and fancies Him such that certain deeds of ours may please Him, that certain other deeds of ours will be altogether displeasing to Him. And then it goes and does its worship as it is able. It may be only the lowest, most debasing Fetishism, if the religious sense be as yet incapable of anything higher. It may be animal-worship, worship of powers of nature, hero-worship. It may be polytheism, with its multitude of gods; it may be pantheism, with its universal transfusion of immanent deity; it may be monotheism, with its one Supreme, transcendent God. It may be the cultivated, beauty-loving religion of Greece; it may be the stronger, manfuller *ritus* of Rome; it may be the purer, more elevating faith of Jesus of Nazareth. What matter about the peculiar system that may be formed in each several case? What matter about the particular name of Deity, "Jehovah, Jove, or Lord;"—about the several dogmas in which each religion may shroud its meaning, and veil the great fundamental truth or truths of all religion? The one truth is that man, everywhere and always, is his own religion, his own God, that humanity is the true object of all faith, that all your heathen or Christian creeds are but symbolic renderings of a universal religion of humanity which is slowly, by long and often painful processes, unfolding itself out of all the cumbrous folds of the creeds, which is gradually putting off all the veils that have so long concealed her fair face and smothered her almost to death, and preparing to appear before all the world as the one, true, divine, eternal reality. Are there not any number of John Baptists (of questionable type rather, we take the liberty of thinking), proclaiming her advent even now in the world? Many of the old religions, they tell us, are dead: all are dying. Christianity which had certainly a great principle of life in it, and which has not been without producing certain good and creditable results in the world, is also grown moribund by this time, is also about to vanish away. The "religious sense" of many modern thinkers of the sceptical sort is getting shocked that the veteran should lag so long upon the stage, and is doing its best to have her fairly hissed off. Her death knell has as good as rung: we are only waiting till that sad, galvanic life that lingers in her has given over those painful, spasmodic efforts, and then we shall give her decent burial. We have no more need of her now. It is vain for interested priests and their priest-ridden dupes to try to avert the dreaded catastrophe. The thing is settled. The bats who still delight in those old Hebrew stars had better be thinking of taking themselves off to their holes, now that the true dawn is breaking. Have not M. Comte, in Paris, Daumer, Feuerbach and others in Germany, and a host more throughout the world, been proclaiming to us the true, positive religion of humanity? We need your feeble old Christian faith no more.

My friends! I solemnly aver that I am not caricaturing anything here, that, though the words I have spoken are my own, this kind of talk, which seems to me rather more of a devil's gospel than aught else, is very prevalent in many parts of the civilized world just at present. All infidelity is more or less resolving itself into something like this. Mere infidelity, —that bare negative thing—will not do. Man must have a religion, and this so-called positive one is what is to be given him now to satisfy all his wants. That faith is now going, they say, to become supreme, universal. So we know what is before us. If what is thus so loudly told us be the least true, it is time we were bethinking ourselves. If Christianity, the faith that has cheered us in our loneliness, helped us in our weakness, and given us comfort and upholding when we were in sorrow or pain—which has borne up our hearts as we stood by the bed of dying dear ones, which upheld their souls as they went away from us; which has shed a light, which seemed so glorious, upon all our darkness, and fallen like balm upon the soul when its grief was at the greatest:—if that, too, is to pass away like a dream of the night, to die and disappear for ever from the world so soon, it is, no doubt, time that we should be thinking of abandoning it, lest we, too, should be crushed in its fall. Well, friends, when the firmament does fall, it may chance to fare rather badly with the larks. But as that catastrophe, so far as we know, is not to take place this year or the next, the larks may keep singing on, up in the blue of heaven, without very much alarm. We, too, shall not concern ourselves over-much with prophecies of the downfall of that faith, which has become to us another vital air, in which we breath and live. We shall let "positive religion" fare on its own way and make what progress it can, teaching the worship of our grand-mothers, and of other such interesting objects of worship to those who choose to listen to it. We, for our share, have a higher object of worship for whom we are willing to live or die, and shall prefer remaining as we are for a while yet. As we have a confidence, which we have the very best reason in the world for believing to be wholly well-founded, we shall be careful how we cast it away at any such questionable bidding as that which we have heard hitherto on the subject.

But, meanwhile, trying for a little to compare Christianity with other systems of religion, we are to see what there is about *it* that gives it an element of permanency which they do not possess. We are to see whether it is true, as St. Paul declares, that the faith of Jesus Christ furnishes an actual declaration of Him after whom heathen men in all ages have been groping, whom many of them were ignorantly worshipping, and whether it is not, therefore, the true positive religion fitted for humanity as such,—fitted to meet all the wants, to satisfy all the religious longings of humanity. It professes to reveal to us all that we need to know. For the most part other religions are content not to know God, to take and worship Him as the Unknown: Christianity professes to answer the request that is apt to rise up in our spirit when any religion appeals to it—"Shew us the Father."

In turning your attention to other religions, I might refer you, first of all, to those which had been in the world before Christ came, but which have now past away. It might be interesting, especially, to refer to the religions of Greece and Rome as those with which the early Church had to contend, and to enquire in what relation they stood to that religion which we at present hold. It might be very interesting, too, to think, for a few moments, of the sort of religious sentiments that were prevalent among our Teutonic sires. But, for the present, we are content to let the thinkers of the sceptical sort have their own way. We grant that religions may die: it is our very earnest belief that all false religions *must* die. We know, we thankfully acknowledge, that many such, that once held captive the minds of men have already "had their day and ceased to be." We shall not trouble ourselves about *them*. Whatever may have been their meaning, and however interesting at another time it might have been to enquire into their meaning, we are quite content to let them lie still in their graves meanwhile, to allow the ghosts of them to pass quite unquestioned by us at present. Nothing is now to be said, therefore, of Jove or Hermes, of Baal or Ashtoreth, of the brute-worship of the Nile, or the Ormuzd and Ahriman worship of Persia. The lower forms of human worship—Fetichism or what not that may still linger among savage, ignorant tribes on the earth's surface, we shall pass by, as unfit for the comparison. In our present enquiry, we do not need the presence of such witnesses in court at all. We shall only take three or four religions that still remain among millions of our fellow-men in more or less civilized nations, and see of what sort they are,—whether the Apostle's words about heathenism at all applies to them. It is, unfortunately, not very much I can say about them within the compass of one single lecture. What I have got to say of them must have regard to them more as actual *religions*, having a certain practical bearing upon men's consciences and lives, than as speculations taught by their wise men in schools. And I want you, very distinctly, to remember, if you would get any good of this lecture at all, that they are actual religions we have to consider, and have the religious element in them as truly as our religion has; that they are actually felt as things binding men's consciences and hearts, obliging them to worship something above themselves. It is only in so far as that is true of them that I have anything to do with them at all. We get no good out of them but by looking at them in this way. There is an unfortunate tendency to give to the term religion a quite untrue sense by certain orthodox men, and as all ill-used words have a fearful tendency to avenge themselves, we find many men who are quite content with getting what they call religion as their one chief end in this world. When they have got that, they have got all that is necessary for them; they fancy that with that, they know God, and are to become all that He wants them to be. Now, we don't need to get religion—all men, savage or civilized, pagan or Christian, have got more or less of that article, and can't get quit of it, however much they try. There are many Hindoos, many Buddhists, many followers of

the Arabian prophet, who are quite as religious—it may be a great deal more religious, than any of us are likely to be, if that can do them any good. Indeed, it often happens, unfortunately, that men, as St. Paul said the Athenians were, are too religious, and have this article quite in excess in their constitutions, so that the most essential thing for them is to get them delivered from it. If you mean by religion, and that is the only right meaning of it that I know of, simply that which makes a man feel that there is more about the world than he can just see with his eyes, or take in by any other sense, that which makes him conscious of supreme, Heavenly powers above him, in some way or other ruling over him, which causes him to believe what he would not otherwise have believed, or to make sacrifices, of whatsoever sort, that he would not otherwise have made, or to do what on no other compulsion he would have done—you may find quite as much of that among the devotees of India, the religious ones of China or Tibet as you do among ourselves. The truth and rightness of a religion, of course, is a very different question from that of its reality as a religion. His religion is certainly the *best* thing about a man; but it, too, may be a wrong and not a right thing.

1. We shall first of all take the religion of India,—the faith of Brahma, as being about the oldest now going in the world, the one which, in varying forms has held sway for the longest period over the minds of multitudes of men, and which even now, commands the reverence of some 130 millions of our fellow men. Of all gigantic systems of belief which our world has seen, this surely is the most gigantic. If we judge of the quality of a religion by the mere amount of information that it professes to give of its ideal Heaven and the dwellers there, we should no doubt have to give the chief place to Brahmanism. Unfortunately, it is not knowledge of Him who is Above All that we find in that quarter, but only vain imaginations regarding certain Beings, more or less eminent, who have emanated from the Supreme God, who Himself is confessedly *unknown* by any of His worshippers. But what strikes us most is just this, that there was a time far back in the dim grey dawn of the ages, when the Indian must have had some *knowledge* of the One God. In the Vedas, their earlier sacred books, there is not a little that looks like memories, grown somewhat dim, of a God whom that people had once actually known. The absurdities, puerilities, “vain imaginations” of their later mythology exist there in a very much milder form. There is still exhibited in those old books a faint sense of One God, over all, Blessed for ever, whose name already seems to have been almost forgotten, for He is called by various names—some of them not very Divine, and sometimes He remains without any name at all. But He is more or less felt to be there. Though the writers of the Vedas “glorify Him not as God,” though their thankfulness and their prayers are not just of the clearest and most confident sort, still He is a kind of object of worship for them. But in the Puranas—the sacred books of a later date, the Great and Unspeakable God has been pushed wholly into the back ground,

removed to infinite distances, raised to inaccessible heights. He has ceased to take any care of ordinary mortals, or to trouble Himself about the affairs of the world. Brahm has crossed his hands and withdrawn himself from all cares, and is to all practical ends, the same as asleep. He has ceased to be the special object of any worship, has been divested of living, merciful attributes, has given up governing the world, as we may say, and has nothing *in* the world left him to do or even to think of. Even in the oldest Veda, God was beginning to be confounded with powers or appearances of nature, with Heaven, Fire, Sun, till He had become a sort of Pantheistic Deity only, and the cry after Him had become feeble, doubting, almost despairing, as in one of the most remarkable hymns of the Rig-Veda: "Who is the God for whom we prepare the sacrifice?" But when we come down among the Purana legends, it is only a number of Deities who have emanated from Him who form the objects of Indian worship. Especially these three, who form the Brahmanic triad or Trinity, as some people have called it, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva—the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer. Some men have been fond of comparing these with the Christian Trinity, and of trying to get some sort of result out of the comparison. Not, I think, with any great success. It is just possible that some lingering tradition of a Trinity may have come down to them from the oldest time, which has taken this form in their hands, but probably the thing is to be explained on wholly different grounds. By the time this belief was growing up among them, the Hindus were far more ready to take their notions of Deity from the intimations of nature than from any other source. They saw that things began to be, that they were kept in life for a while, and then that they died. Every spring the plant or flower sent forth its little life out of the seed in which it had been lying, and for a season it lived and grew in the sunlight and the rain, and its fair blossom expanded in the air; and then, after its fruit was borne and its work ended, its green leaves grew brown and the sap withered in the stalk, and it faded away and was gone. Every day some new life was beginning to be. Every day some other human creature was drawing its first air in the world, destined to live for a longer or shorter period here, destined at last to die. Some one surely was bringing all these various things and persons into existence. Some one was keeping them alive when they were here. Some one was taking them away. Could it be the same Being who was doing such diverse things? The things were so different, so opposed in their character, that it seemed to the poor Hindu, that it could not be the same. There must be three several Deities presiding over those diverse results. They were foolish in their imaginations, you will say: but having once left themselves to such guidance as their imaginations, it was no more than what was to be expected.

Here at least, however, were three Gods who had some interest in humanity and human affairs. They were not altogether separated from men upon the earth. They were more or less taking thought about

them. Other deities, whom they had also imagined, but who were not supposed to stand so closely related to themselves, and were not of much practical religious value therefore, were forgotten, and their worship neglected. Nay, of this triad themselves, Brahma, the Creator, soon ceased to attract much special worship. As Creator, it was felt that he must do his work very much independent of them, and their offerings or prayers. He who preserved life and he who destroyed it,—were not these the two great Beings whom they needed to hold in reverence? And as terror is always in the natural mind a more powerful feeling than trust, it was the Destroyer who soon got by far the larger share of Indian worship. He whose wrath was so intolerable, whose power was so awful and so near, who was threatening them every moment, who was so soon to put an end to those frail lives of theirs, how could they best propitiate him? At what price could they buy off his anger? The One God worthy of all worship had long ceased to be glorified, even to be known, by that people, and there was nothing left for the great majority of them, but this tyrant-god. They felt themselves subject to him, unable to escape from him; felt that they must submit to his inevitable appointment, that at the most they must only try to make as good a bargain with him as possible. Trust in such circumstances was out of the question. Confidence in a Being, whose power and pleasure lay in destruction could not be thought of. They saw sorrow, suffering, death in the world, and heard the sigh of miserable, pain-stricken mortals everywhere. Pain was the lot, death was the end, of all. That was the penalty they had to pay for having, without any blame of theirs, become alive. The Deity seemed to have a delight in all that. They could only hope, by making friends with this God of vengeance, to get off with as small a share as possible of all life's ills and woes.

For life itself seemed to the Hindu mind only a thing of pain and trial. This world of matter was evil, and had proceeded, not from the beneficent will of an Almighty Father, but from a selfish and impure desire in the mind of Brahma, engendered there through the influence of the female deity Maja or Deceit. So it was an evil world they were living in, and there was no cure for it. Life, *i. e.* union to the dark, evil principle of matter, was an essentially evil thing. No doubt there was, at least among those who held by the brighter worship of Vishnu, a redeeming feature amid all the evil. That preserving Deity was supposed, when ills grew too grievous and oppressive, to become incarnate occasionally, and in those *Avatars* of his, to help man a little in his extremities. But the cure was slight and temporary: the evil always remained, and was soon, in spite of any *avatara*, as bad as ever. The Hindu mind felt that it could not do without such heavenly help, without such manifestations of Deity in humanity in order to keep misery and death from becoming the prevailing powers of the world; but the help, when it had come, had not left any very permanent blessings behind it; the comfort it gave had not been of any abiding or universal sort. God in fact, we may say in a word, had become

unknown to that people, and they had just to put up with their own foolish imaginations instead. The world itself, in consequence, grew all dark to those heathen minds,—one diseased, universal, endless jumble of conflicting forces,—forces that grew, out of the Pantheistic meaning that had been first of all attached to them, to be regarded as separate deities till that people have become the greatest polytheists going. The poor Hindu had got into the hopeless case of not being able to see the wood for trees; in the multitude of his gods, he had no knowledge of God. And as there was no longer any living bond of union between them and the One God, there soon came to be little to bind them either unto their fellow men. Society became among them a damnable system of castes,—one dominant, priestly caste claiming a monopoly of all the wisdom and purity, the blessedness and hope, leaving to others the oppression and the pain and the ignorance, with the dreary prospect of having to fight their way up through a long succession of low, disgusting states of being after death, before there was the slightest chance of immortality for *them*. Only for the Brahmin who, by purifications and I know not what, seeks to rise towards the Highest, there is some chance when he dies of being absorbed into the essence of the Absolute Deity. But meanwhile heaven is at an infinite distance from the people. There is no ever-present God caring for them with any Fatherly tenderness and affection: they know not any. This state of things here is to them all a sad delusion: life is a hollow cheat. There is worship enough done among them, but it can realise to itself no union of Divine and human Spirit. God is an unknown God: all their worship is a very ignorant worship.

2. The religion which, of all others, counts the greatest number of adherents in this world, is that of Buddhism. Some 300 millions of human beings, nearly one-third of the whole population of our planet, are trying to get some sort of gospel for themselves out of that. For those who interest themselves in such matters, it cannot fail to prove an interesting enquiry what it is that so many of our fellow men are trying to believe. Buddhism, as a separate religion, sprang up some five centuries before Christ, and was first of all a protest against Brahminism, and professed in great measure to be a return to the more ancient Indian faith. To Sakhya-muni, the Buddha, or latest of the Buddhas, the system of Brahminic worship had become altogether intolerable. There was no light for him in what was taught as the highest wisdom in his native land. It had all grown dark to him: he could not at all remain contentedly in the darkness. A man greatly in earnest apparently, so far as he had any light at all upon his path, with a deep craving after something to rid him of his doubts, he devoted himself wholly to his religion. Son of a king, born to highest honors, his deep and restless convictions drove him to forswear all privileges of rank or royal birth and to betake himself to the wilderness where, as a sort of heathen John Baptist, he lived in poverty and privation, teaching a number of very eager disciples the things that had come to commend themselves to his own religious belief. Buddhism now may

have degenerated into something very little higher than Atheism, but the Buddha himself was no Atheist. It would have been indeed amazing if he had become what he is for so many millions of men if that had been all about him. There was a God—so he felt and taught, an Infinite Being, dwelling in Nirvāna, in a state of Infinite rest, into which also the souls of the purified after death are to be admitted, in which thought or no-thought, will or no-will, feeling or no-feeling, nay even existence or non-existence are all matters of perfect indifference. For the Buddha felt that there was something higher, better than mere existence, that even death or non-existence was better than disorder or disease, that if existence meant only change and unrest, it was not the thing most highly to be desired. And existence, as it presented itself to his mind, did mean only change and strife and care, and the Supreme, Absolute Being, was above all these. Not existence merely therefore, but pure, Eternal, Absolute Being, a thing of endless rest and complete blessedness,—a Nirvāna with no strife and no trouble, was the chief conception he could form for himself as the highest object of all religious aspiration. You think, perhaps, that these are only metaphysical refinements, subtleties resting upon nothing. But I am quite sure they involve questions that touch our inner being much nearer than we think. I am sure that the doctrine that Sakhyā-muni preached would not have been felt by so many millions of our race to be anything like good news, if it had not been that such questions had been felt to be very disquieting and troublesome. They felt that existence could not give them peace or comfort. Their only comfort could be had by getting out as much as possible, from the moil and toil, the care and trouble of existence, to come to feel above these, independent of them. They wanted to know of something like Eternal being, it might be Eternal Life, which was not to mean existence only, which might not even mean existence at all, which was at least to mean Everlasting rest. Their existence, their personalities were excessively troublesome, were only bringing them into grief again and again: why should they not get rid of them? Why should God be pictured as possessed of anything like them? Why should He have any concern with any care or change or trouble at all? I think we should be wrong to say that there is no truth involved in all this; wrong to say that there was no dim trace of a knowledge of God that certainly had grown very faint, in what Buddha declared. Multitudes of human souls felt, after all the vain absurdities in which they had been doomed to wander, that this was good news to them, that there was some higher shadow of a chance for them in this than in any other way known to them, amid the vexations and oppressions of life. But when the small amount of truth that had been thus proclaimed had got developed into a religious system, here also men grew more and more vain in their imaginations. To ordinary eyes the narrow boundary between that sort of faith and pure nihilism or practical atheism could not be very easily discerned. God was too far away from them: from His very nature He could take no interest in them

or in all their pains and struggles and woes. It could not but seem foolish to ascribe love or sympathy to such a Being as they had fancied the Great Supreme to be. He became in their thoughts, an Infinitely idle God, a mere name with no power of helpful or any other work in Him. Nirvāna became no better than an utter blank, an Infinite abyss,

"From which no plummet nor rope
Ever drew up the silver sands of hope."

Prayer, worship, became a means, not of making God and the worshippers One, of getting His help for them in their needs,—His comfort for them in their perplexities and pains, but a simple, subjective plan of doing good to the soul, of elevating and purifying the soul,—a kind of spiritual *dishwater* for washing off the impurities of matter from them. It was a work to be done, and the chief consideration regarding this as regarding other work was how to get it done on the cheapest and easiest terms. And as it was rather cumbrous for each individual to be doing all his own prayers just by his own lips, it seemed a wise economy to those benighted heathens to see and have praying done by machinery. And so, actually, in Tibet and elsewhere, where this Buddhistic religion prevails, the astonished traveller beholds, as he goes along, those praying machines all busily at work, serving as proxies for living men, doing off so many prayers a-day,—a symbol, one of the best going, alas! among that people, that they are not at all irreligious, that there is still some sort of communication, if only of the mechanical sort, between Earth and Heaven. Amazing, is it not? And yet is it so very amazing? It is an ignorant worship of an unknown God. Alas! Even among ourselves are there not plenty of prayers of the dead, mechanical sort, which could be done quite as effectively, and with a great saving of time and trouble, by the aid of machinery?

3. Those modern men who are preaching to us their very lean gospel of a "positive religion,"—a religion of pure humanity, ought to find not a little to please them, I fancy, in the State religion of China. An Infinite, Personal God does not occupy any very high position in that religion; the chief object of worship there is not of any such transcendent sort but that Positivists may consent to accept Him as, even according to their system, a very allowable sort of Deity. When Kong-fu-tse,—Confucius as we usually call him, appeared in the world, the idea of God, which seems to have had a powerful influence on the older faiths of China, had grown excessively dim. The Supreme God had become even then unknown. And Confucius did not seem to care, or did not know how, to revive that ancient, lost belief. He did not seem to know what to do with any such idea in his system. To him God was nothing more apparently than another name for Heaven—a bundle of forces connected by some law or laws, acting, as we may say, according to some spiritual or unspiritual machinery of which Confucius did not understand very well either the meaning or the working. The Chinese mind had in fact, in all questions pertaining to a Personal

God, endowed with wisdom, love and will, become hopelessly bankrupt, and Confucius had no power to restore it to solvency again. He became therefore little more than just the bare moralist of the people: theologian he could not be. The religion he has left has to do with men mainly in their relations to each other; as bound—why, or how or by whom this teacher cannot tell us—to certain duties. Above all, the grand duty of obedience—to parents or to the State, is very soundly inculcated. The family especially is a sacred institution in the eyes of Confucius—our great ideas of religion must be learnt there. If there is any Supreme Being over us, we must see the image of Him first of all in the father or mother who brought us into the world. That one thing,—not a small or insignificant thing either, let me tell you, the founder of the Chinese religion had to declare among men. Here was this one means of rising to the thought of something higher above us. So far, if he had only seen the meaning of his own teaching a little better, Confucius was declaring a high and solemn truth. We *are* meant to learn a great deal about God from that institution of the family into which we are admitted when we come first into the world, which is there, by God's own appointment, to bear witness to us, not only about temporal, but also about Eternal things. The family does teach us something about a Heavenly Father, who cares for us with more than earthly affection, who loves us with an Infinitely paternal love. But just as the other religions I have mentioned, failed in bringing God near to man, in shewing any living connexion, reconciliation, what we call atonement between God and man—because, starting with ideas about God, they lost Him in abysses into which they could not follow him—so here Confucius, starting from the more human side, and trying to expound what was Divine in man himself, was never able, properly speaking, to reach the consciousness of God at all. He did not know of any way of having God brought down to man; he found it impossible to bring man up to God. Men and human relations became themselves the objects of worship. Men were taught to carry their reverence for the living out into worship of the dead. As part of their religion—*great* part of it, they were taught to make offerings at the graves of those who had died. What a dark and hopeless thing *Chinesism* became can in no way be clearer to us than just in this, that it is the grave,—the gloomy, cheerless grave that has become the proper altar of that people. The dead, whom they had not even learnt to regard as possessed of any personal immortality, were those to whom they were to pray. Here certainly was a true religion of humanity,—a religion that has far more in common with such a system as that of M. Comte than Comte himself might have cared to acknowledge: whether that religion of humanity has ever done very much for the humanity of the people who have held it,—whether it has not rather chilled and cramped them in the freedom of their intellectual and moral growth, frozen them in that state of half-civilization at which they had before arrived, and left them standing there, apparently without the possibility of further progress, I fancy I don't need here

very particularly to say. But even in China there has been for long, another sect, not small in numbers, who could not feel content with such poor spiritual fare as the State religion could give them, who have been dimly groping after something better, who have been seeking after "The Way"—*Tao*, by which they might be brought to some comprehension of the Eternal mysteries which they have felt to be lying so near them. The true, Infinite Reason,—a dim reminiscence perhaps of a Divine Word of whom their fathers may have heard, has been the great object of their search, what they have been longing for as for hid treasure, what they have been crying out for in their darkness and need as altogether necessary for them. In their ignorance, often in their foolish imaginations they have thus been worshipping an unknown God.

4. Another dominant religion in the world, and the only other one of which I shall say anything to-night, is Mohammedanism. That religion has very much more in common with Christianity than any of those others of which I have spoken to you. It has, in fact, to a very considerable extent, been engrafted upon Christianity, and has adopted a number of Christian truths. More, therefore, regarding those who hold this faith, than of the rest, we can say that at first they knew God. The knowledge of God has been the one element of strength in Mohammedanism. There is nothing in all history more difficult of explanation than the rise of that religion. The author of it was no great thinker, not possessed of much learning or wisdom, on the whole rather ignorant than not,—nothing higher than a bold, earnest, energetic man. And there was nothing new, except, of course, the fact of his own divine mission, in anything he had got to say. Judaism and Christianity furnished him with all the rest he had got to deliver, and both the Christianity and the Judaism with which he was acquainted were not, by any means, of the purest type. That he was not just the vain impostor he has been called, that he had a very earnest belief himself in what he called upon others to believe, I don't think it necessary to waste any breath in proving. Imposture alone would not have carried him the length he and his religion have now come in the world. Neither will the power of the sword explain to us the wonderful progress of Mohammedanism. The sword has no power to make a man or a nation believe anything: at the very utmost, it can make them *say* they believe, but that is not likely to last very long, if it is not true. Mohammed did himself doubtless believe that he had got something to declare to the people among whom he lived, which they would be the better for hearing. He was certain that he knew more about God than they knew. There had been thoughts growing up in him, in those solemn Arabian wilds, which he felt he must utter. Those thoughts had been helped into consciousness by what Jews and Christians had told him. Alas for him! The voice of the Church in those days had become somewhat uncertain, and there were lies getting told in the name of the Lord that turned away the strong soul of Mohammed from the faith of Christ. The preachers then going, so

far as he knew them, were not such as to take command of such a soul as his. There was a great God over him, he felt sure, who had been teaching men from the beginning, who had been teaching the Jewish people by prophets in the old time, who, more lately, had been speaking to men by Jesus the Son of Mary. Had not that great God been also teaching him? he began to ask—telling him things that it behoved him to go forth and declare unto others? Must not he go and tell his own people that idolatry was an unrighteousness, that they had been walking in a lie and feeding on vanity hitherto, that they had been walking in darkness, and taking one or other of the shadows they found there to be gods unto them? Must he not go and tell them that God was One, and that *His* will was supreme over all, that what was required of them and of all men was submission to His will? It was not a new message; that truth had been declared, even in a better way than his, before. But to many it came, when preached by him with such prophetic zeal and fervour, as good news. It was something to be brought to feel, as a very living truth, that God was, and that He was near them, that He had the governing of them and they needed only to obey Him, that He had rewards for those who gave up their wills to Him, the opposite rewards for those who did not. Men learnt from the prophet of Mecca that they belonged to the sovereign Allah, and were there not to do what they liked with themselves, but what He liked. It was that feeling that made them so strong, so invincible, so indifferent to danger and to death. And let me say, my friends, that we too need to be reminded that that must be the secret of our strength, that we too are to learn, not merely in the low and carnal Mohammedan sense, but in the higher Christian one, that we are not our own but God's. We shall not be strong else. If our religion has not taught us, *as a people*, to do God's will, to become valiant, self-denying, ready in God's name and service, to do battle against all evils, physical or spiritual,—if our religion, on the contrary, be only teaching us to look to ourselves, to the bare state of our own souls, to frames and feelings and what not, if its one great object is evermore not the denial, but the salvation of ourselves, it is so far falling short of what even Mohammed taught. But Mohammedanism wanted one element of power which Christianity supplies. It could only speak of the will of God. It could look upon Him as no more than just the sovereign. The ideas that were formed about Him, therefore, soon degenerated into the blankest, coldest fatalism. Those worshippers did not glorify Him as the loving, All-merciful God and Father. Their imaginations about Him became vain. They thought of Him as of some iron, inexorable Fate, whose will must not be questioned. Resignation was with them the epitome of all virtues, but resignation by itself is apt, when the first burst of fervor is over to become rather an idle, indolent sort of virtue. They did not realise the love of a Heavenly Father. They had refused the knowledge of One who had come from Him, who had come down to them in their darkness and sins, who had revealed the secret of Sonship to God and of Eternal Life. Their foolish heart grew darkened.

If you chance to know what sort of thing religion has become for those who still hold Mohammed for the greatest of all prophets, you will know that the darkness of their foolish hearts is very dark indeed.

Well, my friends ! I have now come to the end of what I had to say to you about other religions of the world. All that now remains for me is to say a word or two of Christianity in relation to them. In this, the one true religion for humanity, we have all realised after which men of other religions, in the darkness and folly of their hearts, were but dimly groping. That of which the Brahmin dreams, when he thinks of Vishnu, the Incarnate Preserver, condescending to help man in his weakness and ills, and to cheer him in all his loneliness, has been fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ, without any of those follies and even impurities that were attached to the thought of those Indian Avatâras ; while at the same time our faith does not remove the Infinite and Absolute God to any immeasurable distance, but brings Him near to us and makes Him one with us in the person of His Son whom He has sent. What the poor Buddhist, in his highest efforts after religion, has conceived of an endlessly Blessed Life, in which the chance and change, the toil and moil and weariness of this one are unknown, is fully declared to us in the revelation of a kingdom of God, and of an Eternal Life which is to know God and Jesus Christ, in union to a God who, amid all His own Blessedness, can still think of us, and do us good. And this our holy faith can tell us more clearly than Confucius could, of the sanctity of human relations. Fatherhood, as we know it on earth, has become to us a true and veritable symbol of what God is. The love we see in the family on earth is ever bearing witness to us of that Fatherly love that exists in Heaven towards us, of the filial love that we should entertain towards Him who is above. And what the Mohammedan has been taught to think about a God whose will is supreme, and the only right rule for us :—have we not got something infinitely higher than that in the knowledge we have obtained of One to whose will undoubtedly we are ever to submit, but who has told us that His will is one of infinite tenderness and love ;—who is not only ruling us by inexorable law, but who, though a Sovereign, is a Father as well, who has sent His Son to suffer and die for us, that we through Him might be brought back unto God. All that the weary, perplexed, darkened spirit of man in different ages and countries has been longing for, has been attained in Christ. The Unknown God whom men have been ignorantly worshipping, has been declared in Christ. It is no mere religion of bare humanity, after M. Comte's or any other model that men want : they need to be raised above this present, time-bound, sense-bound humanity. They have been seeking after that from the first. And in a Heavenly Father who hears our prayers, who aids our feebleness, who forgives our sin, in a Son of God who has by His death delivered us from evil, and restored us to God's favour and given us Eternal Life ; and in a Holy Ghost who is living in us, helping us to become better, godlier, delivering us from all our selfishness and our sinfulness, we have all that we need.—AMEN.

LECTURE IX.

THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE.

HEBREWS XI., 3.—“By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

By faith, says the Apostle, it is that we understand all that. I am afraid that there are a few of our modern thinkers who would be rather apt to demur at any such intrusion of faith into a domain which, they fancy, does not at all belong to it. All questions about creation and the apparent things of the world—they tell us, had better be left to us to settle on quite other grounds than those of faith. ‘We will deal respectfully enough with your faith, so long as she keeps on her own ground; on our ground we can have no reverence for her. When religion has ever begun interfering with matters that science alone ought to decide, she has failed to do any good that we know of. We have got a few superstitious cosmogonies from one religion or another. The Greek had his religious theory about world-making; the Hindoo still has his: the Jew, and the Christian who has adopted and baptised the Jewish belief in such matters, have theirs. But they will not hold water, any of them;—the Bible theory just as little as Purána legends, or Hesiodic cosmogonies, or Teutonic Eddas. We can have little to say, even to the Bible, regarding such matters. Let it expound matters of faith, if it will. What it has got to say about a creation in six days and such like things, we must take the liberty of stowing away in the lumber-room appointed for all such extinct myths—even as high-born men do with the steel jackets of their ancestors, which have become unfit for modern war. For all scientific purposes, the Bible may safely be laid on the shelf.’ We shall have occasion to see that the creation and all the phenomena of the world have their highest meaning in their relation to the human spirit, the seat of human faith; and that faith, therefore, has a good deal to do with these things. But meanwhile let it be admitted that the Bible is not there for strictly scientific purposes, that it is not at all, and does not at all profess to be, a handbook of the sciences, that its claims on our attention do not at all depend on any scientific character belonging to it. I am even ready to grant, if you like, that, in undertaking to speak to you of “Bible and Science,” I am putting together two things that do not *very* directly bear

on each other, and that we may be doing harm to both by trying to find out points of agreement that do not exist, or to harmonize them where they seem to be quarrelling. That sort of work has been attempted just a little too much, I fancy, without any good result from it. Men, put out of their composure by fancied scientific difficulties, have been frequently found trying to put the Bible right where it was not at all wrong, to pick it up where it had not at all fallen. They, by their explanations and opinions about and about it, have been, as they thought, putting it right, when, if they had just consulted it a little more earnestly, they would have found that it was it that was putting them and their notions and opinions right, if they would have only let it, discovering Eternal Truth to them, and troubling itself the very least in the world about all their opinions. For, it has not unfrequently happened that, after men have felt themselves driven to force some interpretation upon the unwilling neck of the Holy Book, they have again been compelled, through the rising of some other sceptical system, just to go back to the position which they ought never to have left, and to accept the teaching of the Bible in its own natural sense. Their stupid attempts to rectify what had never been a-wry, proved to have been so much labor in vain. They had lost their pains. The Bible had been right, had been putting them right. They with their notions, their unnatural interpretations, had been wrong and had been trying to put the Bible wrong.

I shall give an example, ere I go further, of what I mean—an example embracing a great deal of the subject we have now on hand, and deserving, therefore, of a somewhat lengthened illustration. There are, among philosophic men, two great systems of thought in reference to this world—two ways of looking at it especially in relation to other worlds, which have both of them been popular enough at certain times, and which have each their several advocates now. I mean the Deistic and Pantheistic systems. Of these, as living elements of modern thought, it was the Deists who were first in the field, and who had got their say pretty well said out, before the more modern phases of Pantheism had risen to the surface. And their say, as addressed to Christian men, believers in a written revelation, so far as the world formed the subject in dispute, amounted to something like the following:—"You are really making a great deal too much of this world you are now living in, and of yourselves as entitled, by your faith or whatever else about you, to such a large share of the spoil that is going there. You speak as if this poor earth, which is but a speck, a grain of sand, amid the infinitude of God's works, were yet something infinitely superior to all the rest. You would have us believe it has been the theatre whereon have been transacted greater events than can have taken place elsewhere. Whatever this planet may be physically in relation to other planetary or stellar orbs—however small, despicable, insignificant, you still persist in regarding it spiritually as the very centre of God's universe. You look upon this poor human nature as occupying some special relation to the great God, as having been taken up into an Eternal union with Divine nature itself in the person of One whom you regard at once as Son of God and Son of Man. What right have you to look upon

things in any such light? Are not other planets, even in our solar system, of far more importance than this one? Are there not ten thousand other suns elsewhere in space, each, doubtless, with its own following of planetary worlds, shining down upon us from midnight's solemn sky? Why should we imagine that this earth should have alone reached to such high favor above all other of the handiworks of God, that He should have done here what He can have done nowhere else, that He should have given to man such unspeakable pre-eminence over other beings that inhabit other worlds, who may, for aught we know, be as highly exalted above us as we are above the brutes? Does it not savour more of mere earthly pride than of aught else, to suppose that God can have become one with us, that He should have sent His Son to deliver us from our straits, our misery or our sin? David surely was right, when he sang, in that grand old psalm, 'What is man, that Thou, O God, shouldst be mindful of him?' What can we make of your gospel when it tells us that God has such an incredible amount of mindfulness for him?" Well: such notions as these were not without their influence on the theology of last century and the beginning of this one. Many Christian theologians felt in this way driven up into a corner. They felt that their teaching must suit itself to such considerations, must make such concessions as that Deistical argument seemed to demand of them. It is of small use now trying to repeat all that they felt driven to say. But they owned that there was considerable force in what the Deist had advanced. This earth had certainly got a great—what might seem an unwarrantable amount of attention from Heavenly quarters. But after all, was not that just another evidence that God could take care of what was mean as well as of what was high, another testimony of the condescension of Him who watches the fall of the sparrow, the blossoming and decay of the flower, the growth and change of each hair of our heads, while worlds are hanging on his decree and remotest suns are trembling at His nod? Does not the Almighty take thought of each individual of us, however mean or poor the individual may be? And so also, because it had become necessary that some extraordinary thing should be done in order to put right all the wrong of earth, and to deliver it from the power of evil, why should not God do that extraordinary thing, even if it should be the sending of His own Son into the world, and the everlasting union of the human and the Divine natures in One Eternal Person? Other worlds would not be left uncared for because God had chosen to do this for us.

And so far as that argument went, I am not saying that it was not good and fair enough. But undoubtedly it left many of the most glorious statements of the Bible open to the charge of gross exaggeration. There is unmistakeably a great deal said there that seems to show that the Incarnation of the Son of God was not good for this world alone, but for all worlds, that the earth, with its Cross and Holy Grave, has become the centre of all spiritual life in the creation of God. Of all natures that God had formed, it was the human alone that had been taken up into personal and eternal union with the Divine. God had not done the same with other creatures as He had done for man, and could not have done so

without, I speak with all reverence, making a monster of the Lord Jesus Christ. He—the *Theanthropos*, God-man—had not become merely the author of Eternal Life to the sinners who should believe in Him on earth, but the Head of the whole family of God in Heaven, in all Heavens, as well as in earth. Under Him as Head, the whole creation of God everywhere had become one brotherhood. By conceding or seeming to concede to the Deist that the work of the Son of God was only a thing of use for the earth itself, and, therefore, a very limited thing, having no reference to God's dealings with other worlds, Christian theologians, with the best intention of keeping the Bible right with contemporary thought, had undoubtedly put themselves and their theology in the wrong. They had to find out, they soon did find out, that it was they and not the Bible that needed to be put right.

And the way in which this has come about has been the unexpected one of having another and almost diametrically opposed system of scepticism rising up in the world. Deism had had its day, and that day had pretty well passed over. Pantheism had now its 'innings' to make, the thinkers of the older school of scepticism having, as we may say, been fairly 'bowled' out. There could be nothing more different from another than the Pantheistic view of things from the Deistic. Those worlds above us were no longer, according to that school, to be looked upon as so many several efforts of the same creative intelligence and will. All things above and below were actually God Himself—manifestations of the Absolute Spirit. Their life was that Absolute Spirit, and there was no other. But it was the human spirit itself that was the true development of the Absolute. That was the highest thing of all in the world. Man was the one essential revelation of Deity; all else could be looked at only in its relation to the human spirit. All other things, therefore, sank to a very subordinate place. The Deist had made the earth and man to be very small, very insignificant among all other creation-works: the Pantheist would have man to be the very spirit prevading all things. The heavens above and the earth beneath were there to throw glory upon the spirit of man. Nothing had any meaning but in that connexion. The songs of the morning stars, the sphere music out of all heavenly places, had no significance except in connexion with Newton's Principia or Herschell's telescope. "Why do you dream," the Pantheist has said to us, "of other beings, of other inhabited worlds, and travel beyond this present one in search of a glory, the highest exhibition of which is within yourselves? This earth is the only scene of Divine self-manifestation. What has been told us of God becoming man is only a symbol of what is true of humanity in general, of what is becoming more and more true both in the individual and still more in the race. Your vain fancies of other worlds brighter than this one, with higher and blessedder inhabitants prove, certainly, the fertility of your imaginations, but they prove nothing more." And then those teachers go on to tell us that there is nothing perfect outside this world. They point out to us the fact that other heavenly bodies, of which we have any means of judging, are not fitted for the habitation of intelligent creatures at all. The Moon which lies next to us in space, is destitute of

water, and can, therefore, support no life whatever; and looks to us, through the telescope, amazingly like a burnt-up cinder,—part of the refuse, probably, from off the hearth where the great world-fire has been burning from the beginning. One planet is too hot, another is too cold; one far too heavy, another by much too light to support any sort of life such as we know life to be. If one has got any inhabitants, they must be regular salamanders, living in intolerable heat: in another they must be in a state of cold, to us altogether inconceivable. And so on,—a deal more to the same effect. Then regarding the fixed stars, we can have no idea of any capacity for life existing in them. There is nothing perfect anywhere but here. “There is no trace of *spirit*”—so says Michelet, one of the chief living men of that school—“to be found anywhere outside our planet.” The earth is, therefore, if not the physical, certainly the spiritual centre of the whole universe. Hegel, the grand Coryphæus of modern Pantheism, treats the question of a “plurality of worlds” as supremely ludicrous. A sort of luminous eruption, he calls the heavens,—somewhat of the same sort as, not a whit more wonderful than, some cutaneous eruption on the human body, or, at the highest, like the multitude of flies that buzz about our ears in summer-time. That is his theory of the “plurality of worlds” business—a sort of cosmical itch, or a crowd of humming, rather troublesome insects! And Michelet again, speaking more soberly, gives it as the result of his investigations into the matter, that the heavenly bodies are nothing more than the “scattered, naked, and barren rocks of lights that stand up out of the sea of Heaven,” if you can understand what that means. Of course, you will see how much there is that is untenable in such notions. But there is also so much that you can recognise as true in them. We have, at least, got a valuable antidote to all that was poisonous in Deism, if we be just careful how we use it. At all events, this Pantheistic view of the earth and the spirit of man upon it, is serving the purpose of shewing us how hasty and rash men have been in making so many uncalled-for concessions to the Deistic cosmology. It ought, I fancy, to make us feel ashamed to think that we should have needed such a teacher as this very questionable one of Pantheism to set us right, after we had refused to allow the Bible to keep us right. That it should have been the Pantheist, with whom, otherwise, we have such a quarrel, who showed us that the Bible was right in assigning such importance to the earth and man, and that we had been so infinitely wrong in trying to make it say what it had never been meant to say, ought to be rather humbling to us. There is only a danger lest now we be tempted to go too far the other way. There is not wanting evidence to show that some theologians are quite ready to go too far that other way. And if we may feel that we have occasion to blame such a very excellent work as that astronomical one of Dr. Chalmers, for having yielded too much to the Deist, and having forgotten that this earth, with its Calvary and Olivet, is the very centre and source of all spiritual blessing and life to the whole family of God:—so, on the other hand, we cannot but think that a writer like Dr. Whewell, in his “plurality of worlds” has gone much too far in the Pantheistic direction of undervaluing other works of God

for the sake of glorifying this earth, by teaching us to regard other heavenly bodies as almost unlucky attempts at creation that have been much marred in the making. The Bible points out to us, I think, the safe middle course. It admits that the Deist is so far right when he tells us that there are glorious manifestations of Divine skill and power in yonder heavenly orbs as well as in this small planet. It gives right to the Pantheist when he bids us believe that as regards all that is spiritual there is a glory attaching to this earth which does not exist in connexion with other worlds. And while it teaches us, with all humility, to say :—“What is man that Thou art mindful of Him?” it tells us, too, how very mindful of us God has been, how He has raised this human nature above all angels, principalities, or powers, and made it, and not any angelic nature, Eternally one with His own.

I have spoken thus at large on this matter, not merely because it furnishes an illustration of a statement I made at the beginning of this lecture, but because it embraces a great deal of what needs to be said of the Bible in connexion with one of the sciences, namely, with Astronomical science. And you are to remember that, in the subject we are now considering, it is mainly with astronomy and with geology we have got to do. Other sciences may touch on the Biblical domain at some one particular point. Ethnology has something to say about the unity of the human race, of which the Bible also has a little to deliver, and it is well to remember that in this matter the most advanced science is quite at one with Biblical teaching. Physiology may have a slight demurrer to put in, in reference to the resurrection of the body, though, as we said in a former lecture, there seems to be no hopeless contradiction between the two. We shall now, therefore, confine our attentions to the two other sciences I named,—those of Astronomy and Geology, as containing almost all regarding which anything here need be said. And as regards the former of these, and what it may have got to say to us in reference to Bible teaching, I feel that what has been already said has brought us to the right point of view for estimating the relation between the two, for seeing the exact point at which they touch upon each other. The Bible, as I said before, is not a scientific but a spiritual book. And looking from the spiritual side, the earth presents itself, even to the eyes of modern philosophers, as the centre of the universe. Certainly in this sense the Biblical teaching is entirely *geocentric*, not *heliocentric*, nor any *other centric*. Or rather we may say, it is *anthropocentric*, so far as the world is concerned, the true centre of it being, not earth so much as man. The sun, physical centre of the system as he may be, shines for our sakes : the moon walks the night in our interest : the stars are there for our use. From the Biblical point of view, everything turns round the earth as the habitation of human *spirit*. But if you try to bring down this teaching to a mere physical signification, if you imagine that the Bible has any astronomical theory, Ptolemaic, Copernican, or any other to propound to us,—if you fancy, because it uses ordinary language, and speaks so as to be understood by ordinary men, and all men talk and will, in spite of Copernicus, talk to the end of

the sun rising and setting, that therefore it is teaching the absolute physical *geocentricity* of the universe, *i. e.*, that the earth is the physical centre of all things, we can only tell you that you are making a very miserable mockery of holy things. People have been found foolish enough to suppose that, and men have got themselves persecuted as heretics because they have called the sun the centre of this system of ours, and have declared that the earth moved round the sun, as if that were the infringement of some doctrine of God, and it is only within this present century, they say, that the Roman Pontiff has allowed the sun his privileges, and has left all men under his care free to believe that the sun is standing still from morn till dewy eve, while it is only the earth that is moving. Protestants at first were no better, though they certainly got out of their ignorance sooner. Copernicus was a heretic: Galileo was a heretic. Get through with your first and second admonitions as soon as possible, and then let all such offenders be rejected. Was it not all down there in Holy Writ? Was it not best that all teachers of the heretical science should get a stopper on their mouths ere any harm was done? Well: of course the sun did not begin to move for any church dogma, and the earth did not stand still whatever the doctors might say. People only began to see that doctors—even *infallible* ones so-called,—might be wrong, that if they carried their teachings into departments where they had no business, there was no call on them to hear the doctors, and that they might be thorough believers in Copernicus without just ceasing to be good Christians too. We don't think it at all necessary to vindicate the popular mode of speech prevalent in the Bible. We can confidently accept all texts that speak of the rising or the setting of the sun as not involving any scientific heresy, as being in fact the only mode of speaking which ordinary men could understand. We shall pass by all vain attempts of foolish men to fasten a quarrel upon the Bible as if it were telling lies about the sun, as exhibitions mainly of a spiteful puerility. It is of course very easy to say that the Bible teaches us, not the Copernican, but the Ptolemaic astronomy. The Bible does not the least trouble us, that I know of, about either Ptolemy or Copernicus. It leaves Ptolemy and Copernicus to settle their disputes for themselves. Scientific men, having got the commission of the Creator to that end, must search out scientific truth. God did not send the Bible to tell us what we might find out for ourselves. As God's revelation, it needs to speak of what we could not discover for ourselves. It is only in spiritual things for which science has no light, that the Bible is good for us, as delivering what we could not otherwise know. And therefore the Bible speaks to us of ordinary things just as we are accustomed to speak of them to one another. When you and I speak every day of our lives of sunrise or sunset, nobody thinks it necessary to stop our mouths by a bit of Copernican or Newtonian astronomy, or by convicting us summarily of a scientific falsehood. If he did, we should know at once what to set him down for. And the Bible speaks to us just in our own way, so as to be understood, not by scientific men alone, but by those also who have no science at all. Do

you think you would like it any better, if, when it speaks of the sun going forth from his chamber, it gave you an orthodox Copernican sentence about the revolution of the earth on her own axis?

But then, it is asked of us, are there not some very incredible stories, especially in those Old Testament Scriptures, which surely you are not going to ask us any more to believe, in these modern days? What are we to make, for example, of that strange tale of the sun standing still when Joshua bade it? What are we to make of that dial of King Hezekiah's going back its fifteen degrees one Hebrew afternoon? Are we not entitled to look upon such narrations as altogether mythical in their character? I don't know that I am very specially called upon to explain these things. If I confess that there is that about them that I don't fully understand, I will be only doing, in reference to a matter of Biblical interpretation, what scientific men have perpetually to do in reference to the natural phenomena which it is their business to explain. The account regarding Joshua is professedly a quotation from an uninspired book, is given in highly poetic language, and may therefore admit so far of a certain limitation of meaning. It may be so: I am quite willing, if that can be of any use to anybody, to say that I don't know. And so also regarding Hezekiah, though one might speak of the phenomena of refracted light, or something else of the same sort, as furnishing some possible explanation of the occurrence, I don't think it at all necessary. I don't feel that I have any call upon me to (what you call) explain such matters at all. I believe the lesson we are to learn is patent enough, and is very much superior to all possible or impossible explanations. The Bible teaches us to look upon man—man especially in his relation unto God, as something higher than sun or sun-dial, than moon or star. The human spirit when in its right state, as God would have it be, is higher than any or all of these. A Joshua who is strong in faith, a Hezekiah who in his extremity seeks and finds the Lord, is something nobler, higher, stronger than moon or sun, just because he is so much nearer and so much liker God than they. That is about all the Bible tells me. It is about all I care to know. Scientific or unscientific explanations of *how* the miracle was wrought are of the smallest moment to me. I can do without them. I don't know that I would be the better for having them. The fact that the sanctified human spirit is something higher than all outward nature is what I needed to learn, what astronomy and all your sciences, could not teach me,—what, blessed be God, His Bible has taught me.

And we are to apply the same rule when we come to consider that account which we have in the Scriptures of the creation of the Heavens and the earth in six days, with the Sabbath rest of the seventh,—that account which still gives all its meaning to our present division of time into weeks or periods of seven days,—a division which we don't owe to science at all, but to the Bible. That Mosiac narrative of creation has encountered objections enough on the part of science. A mere myth—frowns the objector on us—a myth, somewhat more respectable than that of the elephant and tortoise which we find in one part of the world,

or that of the snake and tree which was once prevalent in another, but not a whit more believable than either. We shall leave it hanging there as rather a venerable remnant of Hebrew old clothes which is not of the slightest use to us any more. Science tells us of a series of unspeakably long ages that preceded the appearance of the human race upon the earth. Periods before the thought of whose vastness the human mind reels back broken and helpless, like the wave from some tall rock that rises moveless amid all ocean war, must have dragged on their long and weary course, before any being of intelligence appeared upon the scene, before one human thought or deed had been accomplished here. Trees of gigantic growth and animals of unwieldy size had risen and disappeared. Amid those strange and marvellous scenes of which the fossils he digs out of the ground give hints to the eager son of science, what can he do but stand still in solemn awe? If the astronomer trembles to think of those boundless realms of space with all their shining suns, the unlimited ocean of Heaven with all its brilliant islands lying about in it, the geologist has no less cause for wonder as he gropes his way back amid those dark old creations, and feebly tries to reckon the incalculable time since that piece of stone he looks upon was a living thing with a mass of living flesh on it, with eyes to see and ears to hear and nerves that were sensible to pain, with instincts of life, will and motion that enabled it to work out the purposes of its being. And ever as he travels backward in his researches, enquiring diligently the meaning of those dim records of the hoary past, the traces of life become scantier, till those fossil remains that tell him of life that existed so many myriads of years ago fail him altogether, and he finds himself back in an age when life was not at all, when the earth was no more than a naked, voiceless, moveless rock beat upon only by the dumb waves of the infinite sea of space that lay around. Even then the earth was: how long it had then been no man can even guess. On this question of time the geologist has no answer for us. When did this earth begin to be? When first did your palæozoic beasts or trees of which we hear so much commence their existence? How long is it even since the latest of those fossil things have had their life and being here? Science has no answer for us:—can only lay its hand on its mouth and remain dumb for us. This fact, that science can tell us so little about the actual period of the pre-Adamic past ought surely to teach us to deal gently with the Mosaic narrative of the creation. If the creation was to be spoken of at all, as a thing of time, and how could it be spoken of as aught else, it must be in such a way only as to be in agreement with the rest of the narrative. It was impossible for any man to tell, and it would have been of no manner of use to us that God should reveal the exact number of years that had elapsed since “the work of creation” was begun, and the first stone of this grand old building, called the world, was laid, and this earth of ours woke up, with the Spirit of God breathing upon it, out of primeval chaos. We did not need any such array of figures as that. We would have been no better for knowing; it would have been as far as possible from the object of the Bible to have set men a speculating on

any such foolish question. But it did fall within the scope of the Bible revelation to make us know how man, as a spiritual being, was connected in some way, with all creatures that God has made; to be told that all the former creations had been made for his sake, that creation could be a finished work only when he had entered upon the scene as Lord of all below. It was of importance for us to know that it was man whom God had in view all along, that His great object had been to produce a being more in His own likeness than any of the others could be, that there could be no Sabbath, no cessation from the creation-work, till that was done. The question of time, I fancy,—of what we understand by time,—a thing of hours and days as these are measured off by the clock for us, did not enter into the *substance* of the revelation at all. It was only necessary to speak of creation in such a way and with such words as might best express God's order and purpose in His work, and might at the same time express the relation in which man stood unto the Creator, and to all former creations and ages. That seemed all that was necessary. Was there any better, more fitting way of doing that than by a *prophetic* narrative, the result of the Seer's inspiration, of six creation days, with the seventh, the Sabbath, as the close and consummation of all? Or would you have preferred seeing each one of the creation-ages marked and ticketed, with the most exact statement of the number of years of which it was composed written down upon it?

In settling this controversy, which is growing somewhat too loud for all parties in these days, between science and the Bible, the first thing to be sure of is, the different objects which each has in view. Whatever science may have to do with, what the Bible has to do with is man as man,—man as formed originally in the image of God, as to be saved from sin and all evil in the way God had chosen for that purpose. It is not therefore a mere cosmogony that we have in Moses or any other writer in the Bible. So far as we have to do with the beginning of things there, it is only an *anthropogony*, an account of how man came into being that the Bible tells us about. All other things are subsidiary to this one object. All prior creations are passed lightly over and occupy but the smallest corner of the Sacred Volume, and have by no means the same amount of importance attached to them as they have in science. To you,—we may say to the earnest, enquiring man of science,—to you, with your museums, fossil remains of a pre-Adamic world, and what not, the contemplation of all those earlier creations is and ought to be one of unspeakable interest; to us from the Biblical standing point, it is by no means of such transcendent value. To you, those dim, old ages, for whose beginning you can fix no date, to whose duration you can fix no limit, cannot but seem altogether vast and unspeakable. To us they are small enough in comparison. To you they are unlimitable ages: to us they appear as six short days, heralding in the true ruler of the earth to the place prepared for Him. This is all the importance we can attach to them. We don't pass them over altogether: they are of great use to us in reference to him who was to come after them, to the human spirit with its history and development. So far as we look upon them from

the Biblical point of view, they are of no further use to us. Moses has spoken to us about them under the figure of those six days, and surely, that was the fittest form in which to express the bare amount of interest that he could attach to them, or that we, as believing men, need to attach to them.

Perhaps you may be inclined to say that this is rather an evasion of the difficulty than a fair and manly meeting of it in the face. Moses tells us that the work of creation was done in a space of six days,—not longer and not less. He speaks of the time quite definitely. And you, by a sort of *a priori* reasoning are only trying to convince us that there was some meaning in all this which probably the writer himself knew nothing of, that there was a purpose in this, which seems, if it was actually intended so, to have been carried out in rather a questionable way. Are you not trying to force upon Moses a bare notion of your own, meant to save you out of a difficulty? I trust, my friends, that that is by no means what I am doing. I think, in interpreting that first book of Moses, we may be entitled to look a little higher than Moses. As we have got the words themselves, I am not sure that it would help us much to go back and try, by any *psychological* or other mode, to understand the state of the author's mind when he wrote them. We believe in such a thing as Seership, prophecy. We *know* that many of the Seer's words were never intended just to have the same sense as they would have had in a historical narrative. We know that when any of the prophets of the Old Testament spoke of a day or days of the Lord that were coming, he had no thought of the clock in the matter, and was not contemplating any mere twenty-four hours as hours are counted here. Is it wrong that we should interpret the Bible according to its own rule, that we should use its words in its own sense? Moses, writing about the creation, was not writing as the mere historian about things regarding which there were chronicles and other historic documents to which he could refer for his information. There could be no chronicle extant of the creation. There could hardly even be any floating tradition regarding a time in which man had had no part to play. The prophet was not one who spoke only of the future, whose sole business was to declare what was coming; his office was to declare the mind of God independently of all thoughts of time, past, present, or to come. And, if we take, as we are bound to take, the Bible's own representation of things, we shall interpret the first chapter of Genesis according to the same rule by which we seek to get at the meaning of Isaiah or St. John the Divine. I am not saying at present by what rule we are to interpret prophecy: what I do say is that the opening of the first book of the Bible is prophetic, rather than historic, and is to be interpreted as other prophecy is. And if we find, as we do find, that the prophet or Seer, when he speaks of any "day of the Lord," does not think of any twenty-four hours alone, but means rather another age or dispensation, are we not entitled to look upon the six days of the prophet Moses in just the same way. We are to judge of the words of the Bible by the Biblical rule, and take them in the

Bible's own sense. And if we do, we shall accept of all that it has got to say to us of the way in which this present time and world came forth to us out of Eternity in just the same way as we receive all that it tells of the mode in which this present time is running on again into the Eternity that is coming. Those days we read of in the first chapter of Genesis will then appear to us as visions of God's days, not merely as narratives of man's days,—as days of the Eternal, not of the Temporal, telling us not at all of the duration, but simply the order of God's work of creation. When the Bible speaks to us prophetically—not merely as recording events of history, which it is conceivable that we might have learnt otherwise, but as revealing truth to us that we could not otherwise have learned, then the time-element sinks out of account, and it is as it were from the standing point of Eternity that we are to look upon the record. Apart altogether from what science may have told us, I don't feel that I have any right to restrict those Mosaic days, nor any other of the prophetic days of Scripture, to bare periods of twenty-four hours. I dare not make the clock my interpreter of any such Seer's-words. I don't know—I am quite content not to know, what those days may mean as actual measurements of time. I am only trying what I can to spell out their meaning as revealing the purpose and order of God in His grand creation-work.

Leaving therefore the question of time out of account, and taking that Mosaic narrative as a revelation only of a Divine order in creation,—an order which had man as its ultimate object, we are able to look all modern science, geological or other, in the face, thankful for all it has got to say to us, but finding no necessity to give up for any of its teachings, the faith by which “we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.” We are grateful to science for having helped us better to understand,—what the Bible had been always testifying to us, and which we perhaps had been rather slow to believe, that the creation was a work of order and not of confusion, and that the Word of God whereby the worlds were framed, was the embodiment of all Law. It is certainly rather striking to observe the order of the Mosaic narrative. How or why should things have just been spoken of in that and in no other order? Is it like an order that man would have chosen for himself? If a man had been spinning a cosmogony out of his own brain, does it at all seem likely that he would have done it just in this Mosaic way rather than in any other? Why should we just have first light, then the separation of earth and air, then the division of land and sea, then the creation of plants and trees, then sun and moon, then beasts and birds, and last of all man? Even science, as we shall see presently, if it takes into account the one leading object of the Bible, may find that the order is not very unscientific. And certainly, if we compare the narrative of Moses with other human cosmogonies, we shall have occasion to conclude that the Bible record is not just the sort of thing we might have expected from the unaided reason of man. We have no time for any such comparison now: those of you who like may make it for yourselves. Let us for our share cast

a brief glance or two at that first chapter of the Bible, and see what it has actually got to declare to us, and how far modern science has much fault to find with it.

When the Bible tells us that at first the earth was without form and void, that there was no distinction of light and dark, of earth and air, of land and sea, I suppose it is saying nothing that the most advanced science may not accept as quite literally true. If the Seer's eye could behold nothing but a dark and dumb and formless mass in the original state of things here, I suppose the *savant's* eye, if he turns it in that direction, cannot see much else there either. He, too, has to tell us, so far as he knows, that there was a time here when the earth was a molten mass without light or life *within* it. And when we read that the Spirit of God began to breathe over that dead chaos, and that the Word of God "commanded the light to shine out of darkness" as the work of creation's earliest day, science also has its equivalent for that first work. It may tell us of light and darkness getting separated, of vapours getting cooled and falling downward so as to leave the atmosphere more pervious to the light, so as to make some distinction possible between night and day. In the same way, through some long-continued cosmical process, we may have explained to us those divisions made between heaven and earth, between land and water, which we read of in the record of the second and third days of creation. On the third day, we hear first also of the creation of life. But as yet it is only vegetable life that is spoken of. For aught that Moses has to say on the subject, there might as yet have been no other, no animal life existing. It was only plants and trees that sprang forth at the creative word at that time, so far as the record has aught to say of it. And here science may have its word of remonstrance: 'So far as we can discover, animal life began upon this earth as soon as vegetable life did. We can give you quite as old fossil animals as fossil plants. We can turn up our *lingulæ* or *trilobites* from the Silurian formation, our *dipterids* or *cephalaspids* from the old red sandstone, that must have lived in a period which has hardly furnished us with any remains of fossil plants.' I told you already that the Bible has to do with the creation only in reference to man, that all the works of the earlier creation-days or periods are mentioned only in so far as they have any bearing upon man and his history and development. Those earlier palæozoic rocks, of which the geologist tells us, and which may be taken as representing the third day of Genesis, have furnished nothing by their animal remains, to the comfort and civilization of man. Your dipterids and trilobites and the rest are of no use to us, except as furnishing curious bits of science which we could have done without. Besides them, those rocks furnish us with what men could not at all have done without. That early time is only of universal interest to us in so far as it grew plants and trees,—in so far as it produced coal. That is the plain fact: whether you accept it as furnishing any clue to the account of the third day in Genesis, you may consider for yourselves.

The fourth day, with its setting of the sun and moon to rule the day and night, which, you remember, had been separated before, furnishes another ground of offence against the Scriptural record. I believe science also will tell us that there was a long period in which there was a distinction of light and darkness, of day and night, before the moon and sun were actually visible here. Before man could come upon the earth, before even the higher animals could come, the day needed to be ruled by the sun, the night to be ruled by the moon and stars. We were not to live under a perpetual cloud; we were to look up into clear and open heavens. Of the remaining days of Moses—the fifth and sixth, little need be said here:—those days on which the animal world grew up and got developed into its present form and contents, and the work of God was consummated at last in man. The work of creation was over and done when man came upon the scene. There was nothing farther left to do. The crown had been put on the head of creation's lord. The Creator could rest from all His labours which He had created and made. It was with a view to man that all the other work had been done. God fixed his own image upon the being He had formed as last and chief of all. The seventh day—the Sabbath of the Lord God, was the right and necessary sequel to man's appearance in the world. It was because man is what he is that that first chapter of Genesis was written. It is because man is the consummation of God's creative work, that we needed to be told in the Bible aught about the events of creation.

I have spoken to you,—quite as much, I dare say, as you cared to hear, about the order in which the creation is represented by Moses as having taken place. I hope I have helped you to see how slight is the ground of controversy that science may have against us for still believing that that first chapter of the Bible is a revelation of a Divine order of work. But now in conclusion we are to rise for a little above the platform of science. When we think of how or why the creation began to be, we begin to feel what the Apostle may have meant when he told us that it was faith and not science that was the true organ for the understanding of the creation of God. "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." What we see here did not merely grow or get developed out of the things that appear. There was a Divine, *ideal* world in the mind of God before this temporal, what we regard as *real*, one began to be. Faith takes us back before a *phenomenal* world altogether, past what is seen, what appears, and teaches us to find in the Divine *Logos*, the Eternal Ideas, of which creation in its various forms is but the feeble expression,—the Eternal *Realities* rather, of which all seen and phenomenal things are but the dim pictures and shadows. For every *phenomenon* has its counterpart, its type, in a *noumenon*, a thought in the Absolute mind. The source of all creative action,—He whereby all creation has been accomplished, is the Divine, Eternal, Personal *Logos*, who is evermore becoming *rhema*, that which is declared. It is by that word of God that the worlds were framed. Science cannot teach us to know Him. For science, with all her

boasted light and progress, is still a limited thing. It has to do only with appearances which are limited in their character, which admits,—so far as they are only appearances, of being fully known, and after science has investigated them thoroughly, there is nothing more left her to do. Already in some departments science seems to have got about as far as she can well go. There is little more left for her to investigate and she must betake herself to the barren realm of speculation instead. When, instead of the discovery of new facts, or the statement of new laws, we can get nothing higher or better in some of the highest departments of science, than hypotheses about the “Origin of Species” and such like dubious things, which may be quite right or altogether wrong for anything I know or care, but which are not *science*, not things known or admitting of being known,—which are clever guesses only, seeking for proof which in the nature of things it is impossible for them to get, is it not a sign to us that, in such directions, science has got to the length of its *tether*, and has very little more to teach us? In reference to that dread and solemn past which lies stretching so immeasurably far behind us, science has told us much that is vast and marvellous, and all thanks to her for her services. She has taken us back to that dark dawn of Time, when the grey morning mists were hanging over it as it rose slowly out of the unspeakable Eternity. She has led us on to the beetling brow that overhangs primeval chaos, and all to scientific eyes, is dead and dark beyond. And her mission has ended there: she can go no further. And there, where science grows all dumb and dark for us, faith can still take up her parable, and speak to us the Eternal things of God. There, where all investigation ends, and the soul sinks wearied from the long journey, with the feeling of loneliness, oppression and dread, it is still the voice, the Word of a Father that we hear. It is He who is now seeking to deliver us from sin and death, who stands there, at the beginning of all things, the Creator of all, and yet our Saviour and our Lord. Science babbles to us of nature, and leaves us questioning, wondering what it means by the term. Is it a bundle of dead forces,—a dumb, soulless, will-less, loveless, aggregate of phenomena and laws? Or is it something that actually sees and knows and orders events by some will of its own? To the *esoteric* disciple all that may possibly be quite clear; but to us who only look from the outside it is all very puzzling. We have things said perpetually about nature that indicates clearly the possession of intelligence and will. Is she a living personality then, an inferior, or even a superior sort of Deity or *Demiurge*? And are you, with all your science, only teaching us another and less reasonable kind of idolatry? If nature is not just another expression to indicate the working and the Will of a Living God, but an object of reverence by herself, we cannot worship with you. Faith raises us higher than nature. From the world we look up to Him by whom all worlds are framed, to Him who has also been revealing to and in us the will of the Father, who has been teaching us,—what all science cannot do, to know God. And when we look upon those phenomena in creation which engage the philosophers' attention, or form subjects for earnest study

to the man of science, to us they are dearer as exhibiting so much of what first of all existed as thoughts in the mind of the Heavenly Father, of what has been manifested, created by His Eternal Word. Science may exhaust itself and having conquered all that lies within her reach, may find at last that there are no more worlds to conquer. Faith deals not with that which is seen and finite and temporal, but with what is Infinite and Eternal; there is no possibility of exhausting those things that occupy her thought and care. By faith we hear, through all the doubts and din and disorder of time, the echoes of a Father's voice—we catch the loving glance of a Father's eye. We have Him who is the Living Word, the Eternal Son of God, revealing Himself to us, in us by faith. We know God. Whatever else may be wanting to us, He is never to fail us. Science can only leave us restless and uneasy, for it ever leads us to the brink of mysteries which it cannot declare to us. Faith gives us rest, for it takes us in, past all mystery, to the very heart of God.

LECTURE X.

THE BIBLE AND HISTORY.

Rev. xi., 15:—"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ: and *He* shall reign for ever and ever."

IN one of the chapters of his "Phases of faith," Professor Newman tells us that, after years of hard study and investigation, he hit at last upon a grand discovery. There is a great deal, as we all know, in the Bible that is, or professes to be, historical,—the narrative of events that took place many hundreds or even thousands of years ago—Mr. Newman had been having his doubts about some of those Biblical histories, had come not to be *quite* sure that they were altogether true and trustworthy, though he did not at that stage in his career, see his way to reject the Bible altogether on their account. But his doubts began to grow bigger and more troublesome, and his mind revolted more and more against the historical parts of the Scriptures, and against the prophecies which he could not help regarding as only history, rather dishonestly written in the future tense. And then, after tossing about for a year or two in this state of perplexity, of dubiety, diligently enquiring into the truth of those notions of his, it dawned upon him at last that the Bible, so far as it was historical, must be all a mistake. History was not religion: religion was not history: He had been a very great fool ever to imagine that these two things could have aught in common. The "poor and half-educated," who need religion quite as much as the rich and the *whole*-educated, cannot search into the truth of historical and literary questions: *therefore* such questions can form no essential part of religion. Religion is a thing of the individual soul, and has its own special faculty, sense, or whatever else they call it, inside of us, and can have nothing in the world to do with events that took place on the earth centuries or milleniums before we were born. The religious heart believes in God's sympathy with itself, and that, according to Mr. Newman, is the whole of religion. The sympathy which God may have with the world, which has been showing itself in all stages of the world's history,—that Divine sympathy which underlies all the world's history, and makes it what it is, is something that religion must have nothing whatever to do with. History, this author assures us, is not religion: you must be ineffably stupid if, after what he has told you, you can still imagine that there can

be anything *historical* in religion, that there can be anything religious in history. Well: it is on the whole rather a remarkable *dictum* to occur in a book which is meant to tell us the whole of what the author's idea of religion is, and in which the author's religion is delivered to us in a *historical* form. Mr. Newman also has had a history, which is of some importance to himself, apparently, even, in a religious point of view;—a history of his successive beliefs, of all the religious stages of development through which he has come. And if there is no religion in history, none in the history of the Bible, is it at all an impertinent question for us to ask, what possible religion can there be in the history of Mr. Newman? He evidently has the idea that we ought to get some sort of religion (not of any high or wonderful sort, I am afraid) out of his "phases of faith." Every page of his book means, if it means anything, "there is religion to be got out of history, if out of no other history, at least out of mine." And yet we are to believe, as about the highest discovery to which this author can bring the world, that religion is not at all historical, that history is not religion. It may be so:—we shall see whether it is so by-and-bye,—but surely Mr. Newman was about the last man in the world to have told us so.

Of course, *if* religion has only regard to the sympathy of God with the individual soul, with the religious consciousness or sense of each individual,—that is to say, if it be a purely personal, selfish affair,—then the history of others, of men or nations, can have but very little to do with it. If on the contrary, religion, so far as it is a right and healthy thing, exists for the purpose, not merely of comforting or supporting the bare individual soul of this man or that, but for the purpose of raising the whole world higher;—if the object for which God has given us a religious sense, if you like to call it so, and given us also, as we believe, a plainer revelation of His will than all the religious senses in the world could have discovered for themselves, be anything at all like that which I read to you just now in those words of the Holy Book, that ultimately the kingdoms of the world are to become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ, then we should just expect to find a large share of such a Divine revelation given us in the historical form. If we were to have any authoritative,—any what we call inspired declaration not merely of what God wants from one man here and another there, but of what He means the whole world to become, it must to a great extent be historical. We must be brought to see how God has been educating men and nations; how, amid all the chances and changes of time, He has been dealing with them, watching over them, trying to bring them right, even when they had gone furthest wrong. We could not of course get a universal history of the world in any revelation from God. The Divine Book, if we were to get such, could not be expected to be a universal record of all that had taken place on the earth. The *spiritual* history of humanity we had a right to expect to find more or less fully portrayed there. But it could not be a book of universal history any more than it could be a book of universal science. It must be a record, not of men's doings towards one another, so much as of God's dealings

with men. It must point out God in history. It must shew us that He too had an interest in what was going on here, that He had some hand in all the events that brightened or darkened the course of the world's progress, that, whatever men in their wisdom or in their want of wisdom, might plan and purpose, He had a plan of His own which would all be accomplished in due time, a purpose of His own with the world He had made, which would not fail of its fulfilment. This is what we needed to know,—what we would have been at an utter loss to know for ourselves,—what the Bible has told us. History is full of awful phenomena, many of which make the soul shudder as we think of them. We see thousands massacred to glut a tyrant's rage or pamper some ambitious monarch's pride. Much of the best blood of earth has again and again been spilt on the ground like water, because some poor mortal, with a crown on his head belike, and blown up like a wind-filled bladder by vanity and flattery,—a mortal who has long ago become, so far as this earth is concerned, a mere handful of brown dust, has chosen, for his own selfish ends, to have it so. We have to see, again and again, as we read the historic record, righteousness put down and trampled under foot, truth slain at the street corner, and men eagerly shouting Hosanna or singing *Te Deum's* the while:—injustice and violence and wrong getting divinities made of themselves and thousands of obsequious knees down in the dust before the splendid iniquities. We see the patriot's heroic soul crushed out of him under the cruel wheels of despotism's gilded car, the martyr's lips, from which truth flowed forth as a spirit of new life to a fainting world, suddenly burnt to ashes in the persecutor's fire, or choked into silence by the hangman's rope. If there is any sense of righteousness in us, we feel grievously oppressed by the thought of these things. Our hearts blaze up in fierce indignation, in vehement protest against the triumphant wrong: we mourn in bitterness over the down-trodden right. We want to know how God looks upon these things—whether He has anything like the same feelings of wrath against wrong, whether He is not judging and condemning all such unrighteousness however grand or lofty it may be, whether He also is not sympathizing with and aiding the truth that may for a season be crushed down under the muddy heels of men. We want to know whether He has not some better purpose to serve with the world than any we can at present discover. We wish to know how it is that He is seeking to accomplish that better purpose, how it is that He eliminates the evil, that He establishes the right. If the Bible, by its history, by its prophecy, or otherwise, can tell us about that, it ought surely to be abundantly welcome to us. For my share, I don't see how a revelation that was to throw light on such dark matters, could well be other than historical.

But then, don't you see, we may be only "poor, or half educated" individuals, and the investigation of historical or literary questions is not at all for such. We need the learning of Dr. Strauss or the cleverness of Mr. Newman to see us through all such difficulties. How is it possible for us—who may have been at no University in the world,

who have fathomed none of the depths of historic or other learning and may never have heard of *Niebuhr's* name in our lives,—to investigate with any good or satisfactory result the narrative of events that took place ever and ever so long ago? But, is it at all necessary that we should get out of our half-educated state before we can know anything of what took place so long ago? Must we indeed go to school with any wise German or English doctor of the *advanced* class, who has set himself up as a repository of all human learning, an infallible oracle, in whose sublime presence all dogs are to be dumb, and half-educated common-sense is to hold its tongue? Is it necessary that we should go to some Dr. Strauss or Professor Newman or any other such wise Rabbi, who knows very little of our pains and trials, for that indispensable light which Moses or Matthew, Isaiah or John cannot give us? Poor or half-educated are we. And, therefore, we are not capable of knowing anything of history or historic research; and, therefore, history can and must form no part of religion? And yet we are distressed and pained above measure, day by day, by the thought of events of the historic sort, of things that have taken place, or are even now taking place, in the world. We are driven to our wit's end to know how those things that grieve or trouble us have been ordered, whether there is any One who is ordering them at all, whether any good purpose can ever be served by the like of them. We find that the great obstacle in the way of all religion is just that historical one—that which the history of the world, as it has been or is, (and we are not so poor or ill-educated but that we know a little of what has taken place in the world) supplies. We can n't help enquiring how far things are right here, how far there is any chance of their coming right. If it were not that they often look so awfully wrong, and that we can discover no way of having the wrong rectified, our religion would be a very much easier, much simpler affair. Ah, friends! Have you not often and often felt even so? Have you not felt that every difficulty in the way of faith was poor and insignificant in comparison with this one, that if you had only some sort of trustworthy light upon the historical exhibition of God's doings, if you could only see a little better what His meaning and purpose, as Governor of the world were, all manner of doubt and darkness would be removed from you? You could see small hardship in becoming religious then. You would almost look upon it as the natural thing to be religious then. But meanwhile, because, when you look at the past and the present, it looks very like a devil's world you have got into through no fault of yours;—because it looks as if wrong had often been triumphant and right had often been put down, you feel staggered. You almost feel, sometimes, as if it were no good believing in a God who has never, after thousands of years, been able to put the world right anyhow, as if it were vain to believe in One who came, professing to be about to establish his kingdom of peace and good-will, while now, after 1800 years, we have just about as much war and ill-will as ever. Your poverty or half-education, if that is your lot, do n't prevent you from asking such questions as these, which are a thousand-fold more dis-

trampling and painful than any that can be raised about matters of historical criticism or literary research in all the Colleges in the world.

But religion has to do only with the sympathy of God for the individual soul, says our objector. Religion, if it is worth house-room in the world, must have to do with a great deal more than that. The unselfish and generous soul will feel: "If God, as I have devils enough to tell me, be such a being as can countenance wrong, and shew favor to unrighteousness, and can act as a tyrant in the world, putting down the weak and only siding with the strong, I don't care very much for His sympathy. If History shews me that He does not care for the truth more than He cares for a lie, that He is in a state of supreme indifference about righteousness and unrighteousness, if He has been upholding the proud and covetous, and grinding the humble and the poor,—if there are lessons to be learnt in history that mean that, the less we have to do with such a One the better. We don't care the least in the world for questions of historical criticism. You can dispute about all or any such till you are hoarse in the throat, till you are black in the face, if you have a mind that way, and we shall give ourselves no manner of concern. But the true meaning of history we do want to know something about. When we see powers of nature proving too powerful for men, when we hear of some earthquake that may have crushed the lives out of multitudes of our fellow-men and laid smiling homes desolate;—of some furious storm that has torn the sides of an iron ship into shreds and dashed the souls out of hundreds of living men, some of whom, perhaps, we ourselves knew and loved, and when our hearts are tortured within us by the mournful tale, we want some clue to guide us in the horrid maze. We want to know whether the great God has *any* feeling at all in reference to such matters. Or when we see the liberties of a people taken from them to please some haughty potentate,—a Poland or a Hungary enslaved, we wait to see whether God has not yet some better thing in store for the oppressed, whether He has no judgment-trumpet to proclaim the downfall of oppression, and the freedom of the people. We want, above all, to know of some Divine order and purpose in the midst of such distressing things. Has the Bible anything to say about that? Can it give us any key wherewith to unlock the dark mystery of history? Does it answer the question we are tempted to ask, where is the God of judgment? By its history of what is past, by its prophetic declarations of the meaning and object of *all* history, does it help us to see, does it enable us to believe that the God of all the earth has done, is doing, and ever will do, right?

This is exactly what the Bible does. It shows us the hand of God in history. It contains an exhibition of God's order as shown in the affairs of men. Though it does not tell us the whole of the world's history, it shews us, in history and prophecy, what God's plan and purpose regarding the world and its affairs, are. It teaches us, by examples that we cannot forget, by doctrine that it is difficult to deny, that God's object here is to put down all iniquity, untruth and wrong,

to destroy all works of the Devil whatever, to establish righteousness and truth and good for ever. It shews us that vice when most triumphant, with the whole world shouting pæans in its praise, has been thrown down and may be again,—that it *must* in fact be thrown down, and have all the life scorched out of it in the heat and fury of some judgment fire kindled by the Almighty God. It exhibits to us the very wrath of man becoming the instrument for its own undoing. It teaches us that verily there is a God who judgeth in the earth. It lets us hear, ringing over the world, the blast of His judgment-trumpets, the rush of His judgment-storms. History becomes clearer to us when we have the light of the Bible on it. God has been educating men, has been judging them, has above all been preparing this world for becoming His own kingdom. It is only as the necessary conclusion to all the history that we read in the Bible, when the Prophet takes up the strain, and bids us look for a time when all wrong will be righted,—when the Devil and all his works shall be thrown out of the world into the lake of fire which is the one right place for them. The Bible teaches us that even oppressive laws and forces of nature are to be made subject to us, that when the world is right, a spiritual humanity will be greater than all destructive laws of nature. The *miraculous* portions of Bible-history are ever teaching us that.

You will remember that I referred in a former lecture to the miraculous character of a considerable portion of the Bible as furnishing a ground of objection against it. It is, however, in connection with the historic character of the Bible that that objection is most vehemently urged. Dr. Strauss, in his "Life of Jesus,"—a book which is already beginning to be looked upon as rather more a mere literary curiosity than anything else, lays it down as an unquestionable truth that everything supernatural is unhistorical; which is another way of saying that all that is miraculous is simply untrue and impossible. He will not discuss the life of Jesus with you if you don't grant him that to start with. And there are whole schools of modern thinkers who have adopted that *dictum*, who give you that to learn as your first lesson in their philosophic or unphilosophic horn-book. You are not to think of anything that Jesus did, or that any of the God-aided workers in the New Testament did, without taking this principle to guide you. No amount of testimony and no preconceived ideas are to induce you to accept of the truth of any miracle. A miracle is simply an impossible thing. Have not Dr. Strauss and any number of other Hegelian doctors told us so? Have we not got other teachers in England to accept of the *dictum* as altogether infallible? If you call in question such a sage deliverance, there is no saying what superstitions or other dangers you fall into. "Everything supernatural is unhistorical." You are trusting in a lie, if you believe in anything supernatural. It is time you were getting put right in such a serious matter. Now that the Tübingen doctor has cut the knot for you, you will be fools if you attempt to tie it again. Well, well: if the truth is only to be purchased in that shop, it is good that we should know. If wisdom is to die with

Dr. Strauss and the Hegelians, perhaps we had better be looking out our mourning apparel. But as we believe that wisdom is to live a little longer than that lot of learned Rabbis,—as we feel pretty confident that some truth is to be found outside of that and all kindred schools, we shall take the liberty, all the same, of calling in question any such deliverance as that I spoke of. We shall venture, in spite of all such attempts at rectifying our belief, to believe that history has had experience of a few things that are above nature, at least as nature is interpreted in philosophic schools by help of Leyden jars and magnifying glasses. We have a consciousness in us that we are not the born slaves of any nature, that there is something supernatural, something that may set us above nature, even in ourselves. We don't see any call laid upon us to accept of Nature as the one sole Deity to whom we are to worship and bow down. We are old-fashioned enough to believe that there is a God above nature, that it is He who controls nature, and not, good friends, not nature that controls Him. We believe that He may put nature right if she is in danger of going wrong, that He may introduce a better order if she is falling into confusion,—that, as we feel that He has done that in our *nature*, He may have done it in the nature of the world too. And if the Bible is meant to declare something of what God has done and is meaning to do for the world, we shall not expect to see Him there oppressed and hemmed in by those laws and forces that are oppressive to us. Whatever Dr. Strauss may say about all that is supernatural being unhistorical, we have a feeling in us that history in its truest and deepest significance, as a manifestation not merely of man's doings, but of God's purposes, must be essentially above nature. And we feel it to be altogether right therefore that the Bible, which is above all else a revelation of God's plan of salvation for a world that was terribly in want of such salvation, should contain so much that is altogether supernatural.

Super-natural, I say:—not contra-natural, which is an altogether different thing. I only say that there is something higher than nature, that there is in the mind of the Almighty God a higher, better order than the mere natural one which is limited, something that is Infinite and Eternal. Nature is only wrong or is put wrong by admiring devotees, when she is put in the place of God, and every knee is commanded to bend before her, and every tongue bidden to be eloquent in her praise. She, too, is a servant, not the sovereign. She does not tell lies to us, if we question her aright, but she has not got all truth to tell. There is a higher truth that lies outside her province and which she cannot therefore declare. When God reveals himself directly to our spirits, it is not a merely natural thing that is done but a supernatural. And in revealing Himself, as an historical fact, unto the world, God was setting Himself above nature, acting without her. The Eternal could not be brought into time, the Word of God could not become flesh, by any natural process. God coming down into the world could not but act supernaturally. Nature could not produce the Christ, and therefore nature cannot interpret all His doings for us.

There is a deeper order than the mere natural one. As the surveying mariner, out on the deep sea, may behold the empty cask or piece of timber which he has connected by a long line and a weight with the water far below the surface, floating complacently right up in the teeth of the prevailing wind and of the upper current, shewing that there is a far stronger current flowing in a contrary direction below, so all that is supernatural in the doings of Christ or of Prophets or of Apostles is an evidence to us that, however the upper surface of things may appear, whatever storms may be blowing, however the worldly tides may be setting, God's deep under current remains the same for ever, and no one can alter or interfere with that. Christ has let down the line for us: He has shown us whither all things, according to God's purpose and counsel are tending: we don't need to distress ourselves overmuch about the vexed and uneasy outside of things any more.

History without the Biblical key to it, is in great measure a display of confusion and want of order. There is no central point save that the Bible gives, round which all the rest revolves. The Bible shews us the true centre of all history. We find little rest for the spirit in reading the history of nations apart from the thought of some Divine Will. Interesting no doubt it is to know what the men whom we look upon as historic characters have schemed and wrought here on earth. But for the rest we are driven to ask, what is the meaning of all this endless phantasmagoria of strange appearances, this everlasting *see-saw*, one up, another down, which history displays to us? Whither is it all tending? What good does it all serve? The world's pendulum just swings back to its old place, and there is so much time, an age, a century, marked off by it, and earth is so much older, but not very much better than it was. Your weary, jaded gin horse of history goes round and round, coming back ever to the same spot, and you think he has been making so much progress all the while. Men love, or war, or make poems as of old; only the agents are different. What does it all mean? Might seems to be right: weakness seems to be wrong. The stronger holds the street: the weaker goes to the wall. It may be Assyria, Greece, Rome; England, France or America. The garb and the dialect change. But the same thoughts are being thought—the same deeds are getting done. When we have gone over it all, we have got a few facts or dates, and may look very wise on the head of these, or a few philosophic aphorisms about progress of the race or Heaven knows what; but—are we much the wiser for all our knowledge?—In the Bible, we come to interest ourselves, not merely about kings or dynasties, but about a living God. We see Him ordering everything in reference to a revelation of Himself in a Son, who has sanctified all history by Himself becoming historical, the centre of all history. That cross on Calvary is the true key to all that is historical about the world. The riddle will not be read by us, the historic Sphinx will not tell her secret to us, save there.

The conclusion to which a great number of modern teachers have come in reference to the historical portions of the Bible is, that they

are for the most part purely *mythical* in their character. Even what may be more strictly historical in its character must be very carefully sifted by some severe critical process, lest there be something false and fabulous mixed with what is more genuine. 'We must have our critical custom-house officers very carefully to inspect all such articles for fear of aught contraband that may be in them. We must resort to our critical microscopes, or get others to do it for us, to see whether no adulteration may be practised on us. We are not going to accept as history mythical tales dressed up to serve a purpose or confirm a dogma.' Is it fact or fiction, this Holy Book? And, if not all fact, how much of it is so, how much of it is fiction? Are we to regard all that we read in the Scriptures as wholly true, or to regard much of it as only pious frauds or fancies? Have we reason, from other contemporary history or from other causes, to judge that all we read there is genuine history? Such questions are being asked, and having been loudly debated in learned philosophic schools, are now making their way down among working men and women. Such questions are only too likely to meet us all in the face before we are quite done with these lives of ours.

History, in its modern, critical, rationalistic sense, history as Dr. Strauss and the rest expound it to us *versus* mythology, for such learned ones have made up their minds that it is mythology, which is not rationalistic and not modern:—the scientific, human thing against the uncritical, *so-called* Divine thing;—that, we are told, is the grand process now at issue in the world. Mythology, it is said, has been assuming the place and the functions of history,—has crept down on us out of the grey, dim, superstitious old ages, has taken and for so long has kept possession of a territory that does not belong to her, and it is full time now that she should be dispossessed. Our learned ones have been getting their writs of ejectment out against her, if she were not so stupid as to see no force in them. She has been passing herself off as historical,—has been teaching the same lessons, or even higher lessons, than history can teach. And she has been in actual possession for nearly 2000 years, and seems to be inclined to keep it. But now the *nemesis* of history and critical science has come. Learned advocates have accepted the brief, the fee of plaintiff. I don't know how many sage doctors and special pleaders have taken and are holding briefs on that critical side. And we, who may perchance be only poor and half-educated, must leave the doctors to settle the matter as they can, and await the issue in silence. No doubt we for our share might be inclined to say that this supernatural possessor has done far more for us than that mere natural claimant or a multitude of such could have done for us. We might plead that, whether actually historical or no, the Bible has been teaching us sublime truths, and has shed a glory and a peace into our lives that history as Strauss and the rest expound it, could never have given us. It has brought comfort and blessedness to our sick and wounded hearts which all the Hegelian and other doctors could not the least have brought us. Your new

claimant, if he were to get possession, would reduce us into utter bondage under cold and heartless natural laws which would be quite intolerable to us, and would take from us the comfortable sense of having a Father in Heaven, who loves us more than He does all natural law. But our learned advocates on the other side laugh all such objections down as irrelevant and absurd, a very impertinent taking up of the time of the court with matters that have no business there. They will hear nothing of all our sighings and longing after such righteousness as the Bible discovers. With their critical horse-hair nodding over their learned brains, their scientific gowns hanging round their learned sides, they laugh all such things out of court, and bid us be silent about them in their august presence.

Well: we ourselves, so far as we are judges in the matter, and we have all of us right of judgment to some small extent, cannot quite afford to overlook such things as altogether irrelevant or absurd. But we are not averse to try the issue on such plain grounds of fact as may be indicated to us. But if we are to leave all theological prepossessions behind us, we certainly are not going to adopt any philosophic, critical ones in their room. If all forgone conclusions, on one side or other, are to be abandoned for the present, let us at least hear no more for a little of such a decision as, that nothing supernatural is historical. We must not judge the case beforehand in any such *preposterous* fashion, (fashion of putting the wrong end foremost) as that. Let us enquire what it is that the Bible gives us as historic fact. Let us carefully examine and weigh, if you like, the things that pass for facts there. They have, at least, been believed for eighteen centuries,—believed first of all by men who had far better opportunities of judging about them than we can possibly have, and who, to start with, had no predisposition in their favor. We have testimony that at least professes, in many cases, to have been that of eye or ear witnesses. We are not sure that we have any right to reject that testimony. Till you are able to shew us that those witnesses were dupes that had been cleverly deceived, or the most astounding liars that the world, with all its experience of lies and liars, has ever had anything to do with, we shall take the liberty, notwithstanding all your critics,—historical protests, to believe what they say. We shall take the liberty of thinking that your historical criticism has not sounded the deepest depths of all truth for us, that it is not to be our one convenient epitome of law and prophets and apostles. We certainly do think that this school of mythical interpretation is dealing very unfairly by us. When we state a doctrine, the outcry is for facts. 'We don't want your dogma. We must see what the facts are. Do n't come in on us with any pre-conceived notion of the Eternal Sonship of Jesus, or the Divine mission of prophets or apostles. Let us see what history has to tell us.' And when we go to the facts,—when we say, there is nothing we wish for more than to know what these are, let us examine the witnesses, let us hear their testimony, then we are told that we must accept of no testimony whatever that would establish aught supernatural. We were not to take

any notions of our own into the investigation: and when we have consented to that, then straightway we are informed that we must carry this infidel notion with us into the investigation. Have we not a right to say: "We were not asking you to accept of our principle to start with: what right have you to expect that we shall accept yours? We are not bidding you look through our spectacles; is it not rather absurd, at this stage of the business, that we should have to put on yours? We were willing, in a question of historic investigation, to sink for a little our own beliefs, to enter without prejudice upon the enquiry to which you invite us. We are not going to accept your dogma, if we have for a little consented to leave our own out of view. In all common honesty can you expect this? Is not this altogether an unfair, unwarrantable pre-judging of the whole case? Is it not a most unrighteous setting up of your own opinions as the sole judge of historic fact?"

You will see that we have no time now to enter at any length into the consideration of the actual contents of Bible history. It would have been interesting, if we could have done so, to have been allowed to consider together the testimonies that are turning up for us from all quarters, to the historic truth of the Bible. It is surely remarkable enough, and ought to serve as a confirmation of our faith, that, just in these days, when men have got so thoroughly awake to all questions respecting the credibility of the Scriptures,—when, in fact, the great question has come to be whether we are to accept the history of the Bible as actually historical, new witnesses should be springing up in the most unexpected ways to vouch for the veracity of the Sacred Record. Are not modern scholars telling us that, even in such an apparently uninteresting piece of Scripture as that long list of strange names in the tenth chapter of Genesis, they are finding a key to unlock all the mysteries of ethnology? Is not that dim old record of the expedition of Chedor-laomer in the 14th chapter of the same book substantiated by inscription on Babylonian bricks? Has not Egypt, with her multitude of remarkable monuments, with her strange hieroglyphic records, been furnishing corroboration, more or less direct, of the Mosaic history? And though those Egyptian stone-records have mainly to do with another place and another class of events from those with which Moses had to do, still do they not enable us very clearly to see that the Egypt out of which Moses led the people of God was the very same Egypt which has left its own picture graven on its rocks for us? And then we have had all those Assyrian discoveries made in these latter days by Rawlinson and Layard and others more, which no one can pass lightly over, who is at all interested in the historic character of the Bible. Many of the things that we read of in the Sacred Narrative in reference to the Assyrian empire, especially in its connexion with the Hebrew people, which had assumed a very mythical character in the rationalistic minds of the beginning of this century, have been proved, from the bricks and marbles of Nineveh, to be altogether true. We have read even on those Assyrian monuments many

names of Kings of Judah or Israel which were known to us before only from the Bible. When we read of the Jewish or Israelitish Kingdom becoming at any time tributary to the King of Assyria, we find a similar statement on the monuments. The invasion under Sennacherib is given in just the same way by the two records, and even the miraculous destruction of his army receives confirmation from the silence of the monuments as to its ultimate fate. From Babylonian inscriptions we have not a little to establish the truth of that book, which historical criticism looks upon as the most incredible of all the books of the Bible—the book of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar's strange malady even is hinted at. Belshazzar, whose name was quite unknown before, except from what is said about him in the Bible, is actually mentioned on one of the inscriptions as reigning King of the Chaldeans when the kingdom fell into the hands of Darius. The monuments of Assyria and Babylon, after having lain unread for the last twenty-five centuries, are now, in the wondering ears of this modern 19th century, telling considerable portions of the Bible history over again, and we find the two substantially at one. The facts of the Bible are not contradicted; some of them are repeated in just the same way; there is no irreconcilable difference, where they are not given in exactly the same way.

When we come to look at the historic character of the narrative portions of the New Testament,—the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, we find by far the larger share of the objections urged against their credibility resolving themselves into that *a priori* one that I mentioned before, of everything miraculous being impossible. As we cannot accept that dogma, we must judge of the veracity of the New Testament on quite other grounds. A great deal has been made of the differences, real, or supposed, which are said to exist between the writers of the Gospels. "Hopeless disagreement of Matthew and Luke;" "irreconcilable contradiction between Luke and John;"—such things have been spoken about more than enough, more in the tone of a special pleader, determined to make out a case than in the solemn spirit of men anxious to find out the truth. If we go, not with any Straussian or other critical microscope, but with open, unprejudiced eyes, to the reading of the Gospels, we shall find that the differences are of the slightest sort,—that, though each writer tells his own tale, he does not make a liar of another writer who tells the same tale in a different way,—that, in fact, we have got independent witnesses to deal with, who certainly do not repeat one another's words, but who give substantially the same testimony. There is no difference between the various evangelists which we are doomed to look upon as of the hopelessly irreconcilable sort. One witness is not swearing to one thing, and another to the quite opposite thing:—they are telling us the same thing, with such variations as were to be looked for.

The Book that has received the roughest handling from Dr. Strauss and his fellow-laborers on that questionable "historical criticism" field of theirs, has been the Fourth Gospel, so-called of St. John. 'Surely', they have said to us, 'you are not foolish enough to take that for his-

tory. Is that book at all like the narrative of what a man has himself actually seen and heard? Is it not much rather like the production of a man, who had sat down, of malice prepense, to make out a case for himself, who had deliberately set himself to declare as facts what were only the dreamings and fancies of his own mind, who had formed his own notions of what a "Christ" should be, and who has in this narrative fashion, woven all his own notions into the life of Jesus of Nazareth? We cannot imagine that such a book as that ever was, or could have been, written, by the fisherman of Galilee, the Apostle John. This pseudo-John must have been some *theosophic* dreamer of a much later date, some man acquainted with the Neo-Platonic philosophy and pretty well read in the writings of Philo the Jew, and who, having become a disciple of Christianity, has taken the historic Jesus as a centre for all his Neo-Platonic fancies, and given us rather a pretty philosophic, mythological story-book as the result of his work. The other, earlier evangelists were more ignorant men, and allowed themselves to be willingly deceived, having unfortunately no critical sagacity in them. And their picture of Jesus is therefore somewhat of a grosser type. But this fourth evangelist was a bit of a philosopher, and this ideal picture of the Christ, that he has left is, as a work of art, not at all amiss. But as for its being historical!—and the incensed critic is ready to walk off in a huff, that you should have the effrontery to ask him to believe such a thing at this time of day. The conclusion of that school of modern historical criticism is, that the fourth gospel was written by some man who lived towards the end of the second century, who has told us, not what ever took place in the world, but only what he imagined ought to have taken place, so as to suit his own views, and do good to his own faith. Unfortunately, the latter half of the second century did not abound in men tinctured with the spirit which we see exhibited in the fourth gospel. To any one who has any acquaintance with that period, with the direction in which the religion and theology of it were tending, it will seem quite as impossible to suppose that that second century could have produced a "Gospel of St. John," as it would be to fancy that the soil of the eighteenth century could have raised a Hamlet or a "Paradise Lost." Dr. Strauss and the rest who have assigned the writing of this book to that period have had to look about in vain for some one to whom they could ascribe the authorship. If it was composed then, is it not very wonderful that nobody should have found out, then or now, who the author was? But we are not left to such speculations for light on this matter. There is evidence enough now to shew that this book was actually in existence and was held in reverence as St. John's very near the beginning of the second century. A book has turned up and been brought to light in these days, written by a father of the church somewhere about the time when, according to our historical critics, St. John's gospel ought to have been written. And in that book Hippolytus,—for that is the author's name, quotes passages from Basilides and Valentinus, the early Gnostic heretics, from which it is evident

that this fourth gospel was in use both among the orthodox and the heretical, and employed by them for the settlement of their differences, certainly as early as the year of our Lord 117. And of course it must have been written a considerable time before that, and as the church has never had any doubt as to who the author was, it could only have been written by the beloved disciple of the Lord, John the Divine. And if written by him, it contains, of course, an actual record of what he himself had heard and seen. It is a great pity that facts will not suit themselves to the requirements of historical criticism. For our share, we prefer being on the side of the facts.

My friends! I cannot enter any further into such questions to night, though, I trust, enough has been said to shew you that we have no interest in trying to avoid all questions raised in these days as to the historical character of the Bible, that we have every interest in having all such questions fairly tried on historic grounds. We need have no fear, and have none, in awaiting the issue of all honest, earnest investigation on this territory, however loudly the doctors may rave, however fiercely the critics may frown. We have seen no reason as yet to believe that the Bible is a book of lies and myths and fables; we feel certain it is not going to be proved to be so in our day nor in any succeeding one. We feel ourselves, on any and all grounds, entitled to hold fast our confidence that the Bible has only told us the truth,—a truth that makes us free, that declares the mind of the Eternal God to us. The Bible is, as I said before, to a large extent historical, just because it has to do with a world which is, through long processes of historical development, to be ennobled, saved, glorified. It does not tell us to look back only on the past. It tells us that all that is past has been done with a view to what is yet to be. While we look back, in faith and thankfulness on a Christ that has been and who has revealed the Father, who has suffered in the flesh, who has made atonement for sin, we are taught that the blood He shed on earth contained the seed of life for the world itself. That sure word of prophecy has told us that the history of the world was ever after to be much dependent on the influence that sprung from the Cross, that the world was to be sanctified and become of God, seeing the Son of God had died in it, that sin and disorder and death were to die out of a world for which He had given His life. Well: confusions and devilries enough abound to a terrible extent still in the world, and modern historic science, with all its 'laws of development,' 'progress of the race,' 'advance of civilization,' and Heaven knows what, can give us but small light on the matter, and can tell us but little of what the end is to be. But through the dim veil that overhangs the future, God in His book, has given us glimpses of what it is all coming to, of the glory that is yet reserved for the world. Above all the war and discord, the toil and turmoil of visible things;—above the harsh grinding of the world's wheels, above the anguish-cries which foretell the birth of something grander, better, but which are meanwhile only sad symptoms of disease and sorrow;—above all the sounds of vanity

and the loud Babel-din of unrighteousness, this grand old Book enables us to hear coming nearer to us, amid all the unrest and torment of the nations, the music of angel harps and of angel voices, as they herald in the consummation of all history, the winding-up of the whole purpose of God in reference to this sin-smitten, sorrow-burdened world, as they foretell the advent of Earth's true Lord to occupy Earth's universal Throne and declare before all the Universe that "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." AMEN.

LECTURE XI.

SIN AND LAW: HAMARTIOLOGY.

I JOHN III., 4. :—"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law ; for sin is a transgression of the law" (or, sin is lawlessness).

THE presence of sin in the world is not a phenomenon with which Christianity alone has to do. Whether we accept the Christian explanation of it or no,—whether we hope to see the evil rectified according to the Christian plan or no, the fact still stands there fronting us, stern, undeniable, appalling ; throwing its baleful shadow across the gladnesses and hopes of humanity ; blighting and wasting, as its nature evermore is to do, so much that is best and most promising in the life of the world. It is there in the midst of us :—we cannot, with all our police or other regulations, get that to move on and leave us. By some means or other it has got lodgment for itself in the heart of humanity, and remains there, working out all its evil fruits from thence. We dare not think lightly of it ; the presence of it is a problem which presents itself for solution to the minds of all earnest men. The Bible, as we know, tells us that at the first God made man wholly right, a holy and godlike being, with no knowledge of evil. It tells us that man fell from that estate, that he broke the law of his being and became evil, that the whole race has become subject to evil, in consequence of the Divine order appointed for the race having been broken. We may quarrel with the doctrine of a fall, as declared in the Holy Book, as preached from theological pulpits throughout Christendom, as much as we like. We may treat the story of Eve's apple and Adam's fall as a very foolish fable. We may say that we can't see, even supposing that the story of the first man and woman were quite true, how that can affect us. We may find what fault we please with all the Bible says about the origin and nature of sin. But that will not help us out of the meshes of that difficulty which the presence of sin in the world holds out to us. You may say what you like about the *doctrine* of a fall. The grim and terrible *fact* of a fall is there before your eyes every day in your lives, in all places where you may go. When you see everything gone so grievously wrong about the world, that everywhere, in high places and in low, iniquity of some sort, is rampant, that wrong is often powerful, that truth and right are often forced to hide their heads in obscure corners, that the world, in fact, has become a thing of confusion and disease ;—when we see the evil

actually existing and at work in the world, and feel that there is the tendency in ourselves to do evil or to become evil, that sin, in fact, has a certain *power* over us, it may strike us with amazement that, with a good and beneficent God, as we trust, at the head of it, the world should be so bad. But in spite of all protest against it, the evil continues and grows, and is to be explained by us in the best way we can, or to be left standing without explanation, if we have no wisdom in us to interpret it. We are driven to ask, 'Did God at the first make man,—make the world, like that?' Was *He* verily at the trouble of creating a race that was meant to be as guilty as this one has proved? We feel sure that God must have meant something else and better, that it is not His will that is leading men into sin, that it is not according to His order of things that iniquity should abound. Man must have *fallen* therefore, either in the way told us in the Bible, or in another, from some better and more righteous estate. For we are to remember further, that iniquity did not begin its career this year or the last,—this century or the last, nor in any one of all the ages of which other, non-Biblical history has to tell us. It is not the men of this generation, nor of any of the so-called historical ages, that have taken up the trade of sinning at their own hands without having learnt anything of it from generations that went before. It has come down to us from old, from the oldest ages, transmitted, in the way that divines call Original Sin, or in some other way, from one age to another. And it does not seem to grow less. It has no thought apparently of retiring from the scene, of sending in its resignation, and having done with the management of human affairs. Each generation, as it comes, is found mourning over some part of the inherited corruption, which has grown just too corrupt, but from which it is hard to get itself set free. If it does, after infinite difficulty and sore travail, get itself delivered from any part of the evil, it is only to get something as bad in its room. It is not a good world we live in,—that seems to be the terrible fact about it, and does not promise, by any natural process known to us, to grow much better. If we are inclined to doubt what the Bible tells us about a fall and transmitted guilt, the plain alternative for us to adopt is to believe that the world was never meant to be any better, that the Creator of it,—if we admit a Creator, just wishes it to be so and no better; and also that the sin of one generation has nothing to do with that of other generations. It is very difficult for us, as we look at the stern facts of the universe, to adopt either the one or the other, of these two conclusions.

Theologians, as you are aware, are accustomed to speak of sin as of two sorts:—original and actual. As I am not at present expounding any system of dogmatic theology, I don't find it necessary to enquire into the *dogmatic* value of these two expressions. To explain any system of divinity is not my especial object, as you know, in the delivering of these lectures. Not this or that theological system at present, if you please, my friends:—but rather the question whether any truly Christian theology can do aught to meet the wants of this age or to still the hubbub and strife of the schools:—that is the sort of problem I have been poorly endeavouring, in these discourses, to work out. I am not going, therefore, to take these

terms, original and actual sin, as expressing merely some dogma that may have been taught about them by one theological party or another, but as representing great, terrible, undeniable facts. On the one side, let *actual* sin represent to us the moral evil *now* existing, the sin actually getting done in the world *now*; on the other, let *original* sin represent the same evil, not as having begun now, but as having come down, tainting all the stream of the world's story, from remotest time; and let us see what "Christianity and modern thought" have severally to say of each of these two things. What sin is,—whence sin has come: these two questions lie there, awaiting our consideration.

1. There *is* sin in the world. No one is likely to deny that. Whatever we may make of the admission afterwards, the admission must be made. Men may afterwards try to make it appear that sin is by no means so "exceeding sinful," not so utterly evil, as they have been told; but at all events, it is there, to be judged of according to the light that is in us. And then, I imagine that the most of modern thinkers will admit the universal prevalence of sin. So far as I know them, the different schools of modern thought are quite as much concerned as we are in explaining the nature of sin on the ground that it is not a partial or exceptional phenomenon, but a thing universally existing. It is not one man or woman here, another there, another somewhere else, that is tainted with this disease, liable to the charge of sin. It is a malady that cleaves to the race, to humanity as such: or at least (for some may not be inclined to admit the *morbid* character of sin) it is a thing that is true of all humanity. Sinners are, unfortunately, not exceptional beings in the world at all, possessing a different nature from others, something that others more lucky or wise have not got. There are those, no doubt, who sin more, who have fallen deeper into the mud, who have more grievously offended against all law, human or divine, who have achieved for themselves a sad pre-eminence in guilt, before whose crimes other men stand dumb with amazement. But even the purest, the most respectable have no reason to congratulate themselves on any immunity from that fatal tendency which has led their more criminal brothers or sisters so far, so foully wrong. We have no other nature than that which dwells in the man who has shed a neighbour's blood, or in the poor, abandoned woman who is rioting or rotting in her shame. They have gone further on an evil road on which it was quite possible for us also to have gone: we have to be thankful that we have not been left to go so far, so hopelessly wrong as they. But they too are of the same human family. They started in life with the same nature, the same powers, affections and tendencies as we. In that godless, lawless fashion they have only been working out certain tendencies which existed in them, and which must have existed also in us. Potentially, we have just the same capacity for sin as they. When the godly minister of last century said, as he saw some poor criminal, with whom society had nothing else left for it to do but to choke the life out of him by help of the hangman's rope, dragged to his sad fate:—"There, but for the grace of God, goes John Berridge,"—we must all of us feel, even if we should not adopt his theological phraseology, that he was speaking a great truth. Even though

some men may not believe in a grace of God, they must still feel that, were it not for the restraining of something or other, there was the possibility in them of becoming as bad as the worst offender going. There was the seed in them that might have ripened to just such another harvest. There may be criminals in the world from whose presence we would feel inclined to flee as from a pestilence, the very thought of whose iniquity makes our blood run colder; but they are of our flesh and blood all the same, our very brothers and sisters, and in them therefore we have a picture—not a pleasant one by any means, of the potential iniquity that is in us,—a picture of what we, but for “the grace of God,” or whatever else we choose to call it, might have become.

But, does not the fact that sin exists, that it is a present power in every man, lead us to the, not very satisfactory, conclusion that it is an actual law of our nature, part of the necessary order of our lives? Human nature does not exist—so far as our experience goes, *cannot* exist without it. Is it not, therefore, to be regarded as part of the very constitution of humanity, one of the natural laws according to which humanity is ordered? As we shall see presently, there are not a few modern thinkers who are quite ready to adopt the affirmative to such a question, and who are trying to furnish us with such an explanation of sin as is possible on the supposition of its being altogether according to the true order of things. But, before entering on the consideration of any such Hegelian or other speculations, it may be just as well to remember that the Bible is very directly at issue with any such conclusion. The words I gave you as the text of this present lecture tell us plainly that sin is not law, but a transgression of law, a lawlessness (*anomia*), or the state of being without law. That, whether right or wrong, is St. John's interpretation of the fact—what he unhesitatingly declares to us. Sin is not a law impressed upon humanity: it stands there as an evidence that man has cast off, has broken through, the true law that was laid down for him, that law regarding which there is ever an uncompromising witness within ourselves. Sin is not the right order of things: the right order is evermore directly opposed to sin. God's law, in whatever way expressed, is evermore judging, condemning sin. Sin, in fact, whatever it may think of itself, has, properly speaking, no business here: if summary justice were to be done upon it, it would speedily be sent out of this. According to the Divine order of things, sin has no right to be dominant in the world; that order rigidly exacts, and in due time will make good its exactions, that sin should get itself abolished in the world. Sin is not law, but opposition to law. The law says one thing and goes one way; sin says the opposite thing, goes the opposite way. “He that doeth sin transgresseth also the law.” Moral evil may be meanwhile as universal in its operations as any law can be. It may be a sad and melancholy characteristic of the race. Perfectly sinless humanity may be a thing unknown within the range of our experience. That only proves that humanity is not at present in its right or lawful state, that by some means or other it has got out of its right estate, and cannot, at present,

get back to it again,—that, however much other laws of God's universe may have been kept, the law of humanity has been broken,—that the human race is not fulfilling the true object, nor accomplishing the proper purpose of its creation. This is the way in which our Sacred Book teaches us to regard the true character of sin: whether or not it is a more reasonable way than the one in which certain modern schools of thought, presently to be mentioned, regard it—I speak as unto wise men—you are to judge for yourselves.

If we regard sin as part of the established order of the universe, actually a law of humanity, we are driven to adopt one or two alternatives. Manicheism gapes for us on the one side; Pantheism stretches out its arms to receive us on the other. We must either, like the ancient followers of Mani, adopt the doctrine of a double lordship of the earth, of a Lord of Light and a King of Darkness waging an almost equal warfare for the empire of the world, or we must plunge into the Pantheistic belief that whatever is, is Divine, is God. Of the former of these alternatives there does not need to be said much here. For though there may be not a little of ill-developed Manicheistic sentiment hovering on the outskirts of modern thought;—though there may be a good few who, if their thoughts mean anything, must mean something pretty much akin to the ancient Manicheistic doctrine, yet this sort of belief is not finding any openly expressed or very intelligible exposition in these days. Manicheism, not quite dead yet, so far as I know, but not able to give any proper account of itself, and liable, therefore, to be apprehended and brought to punishment, under any spiritual vagrant act that may be going, can only appear in disguise among us, and vent its meaning in equivocal words. If it were speaking out its true meaning, it would be something like this:—"Sin is universal. Evil is everywhere prevalent. Therefore sin is altogether natural and part of the universal order. But so far as it is a good and righteous God who rules over all, we cannot believe it to be His order. There must be another Being, equal or almost equal in influence and power, who is also doing a large share of the business of governing the world, one whom the Holy God cannot as yet wholly check or put under, who is able meanwhile to carry on his work and to accomplish his purposes in spite of all efforts of the Holier Deity to the contrary. You may call him Ahriman, as they did of old time, or you may call him Satan or Devil, if you want to give a more Christian nomenclature to your belief; but, in any case, the plain fact remains that he is doing according to his own will and cannot meanwhile be hindered. His power cannot be broken—his works cannot be destroyed. He, too, is a God in this world. Until the better God has fought and overcome him, things must remain even as they are." According to this belief, there would, you see, be two actual Gods, opposed to each other, fighting hard for the mastery, giving no rest to themselves or the world because of their terrible strife. There is, I daresay, very little danger of any such doctrine getting to express itself so distinctly in these times. Nevertheless, we should not conceal from ourselves that there is a tendency,

by no means weak or powerless, in the minds of men,—in our minds as well as others, towards this—which was in the early ages of the Church very distinctly pronounced to be a damnable—heresy. There is a dread power of evil ruling in the world,—over the minds of men. It must be by the will of some one who claims authority over human nature that all the sin we see or hear of is done. And we are sure that it is not the will of the good God: it must be of some other whose power at least is so great that he can, meanwhile, stand against all efforts to put him down. We are almost apt to begin to imagine that the Devil, if that be the name of him, is a being of little less than infinite power, that he is able to impress his own laws upon humanity, to establish a devilish order of his own, and to get his will done on earth quite as much, or perhaps even a little more than the will of the righteous God is done. There is a tendency in us, I say, to believe the like of that. There is not much occasion however, I fancy, to say much by way of answer to any such belief. It is enough that I simply warn you against it. When fairly stated as matter of opinion, it becomes powerless. Conscience and scripture alike repudiate it. Neither the Word of God nor the reason of man can give it any countenance. Whatever the devil may be, and certainly, to judge from his achievements, he must be only too powerful, we cannot just make another deity of him. We cannot suppose that he has the ordering of things here; he is only allowed for a while to interfere with the true order. We can only suppose that we must have been hearkening to one of his own astounding lies if we have been tempted for one moment to imagine that his power and wisdom were aught but limited, or that he himself was, at the very utmost, aught but the first and chief of all transgressors.

But let us turn now to consider the other alternative, which is much the more common as well as more insidious of the two. You know that a great deal of modern thinking has been getting done after the Pantheistic fashion, and in no particular is the teaching of the Pantheist more perilous, to my thinking, than when dealing with sin. To him sin is a mere natural phenomenon, one of the extant things of the universe, and therefore right and divine. As God and the world are not, in his estimation, two things, but one and the same, so whatever is in the world is a manifestation of the Absolute. Sin is only another revelation of what God is. Not only is sin to be tenderly dealt with, therefore, but it may even, in the mind of the Pantheist, become an object of worship, so far as he deals in such an article. There are such aphorisms going on in popular works now-a-days, and claiming acceptance as quite infallible articles of faith, as that "evil is only good in the making," "sin is righteousness in the course of growing," and so on. To which we have only to answer that it seems rather a questionable process by which good is getting itself manufactured, and we would very much prefer some other, better plan if it were at all possible. If we could have a harvest of righteousness without any growth of sin, we would certainly prefer it much. For our own share, we have small hope of seeing tares growing into wheat, of beholding iniquity ripening

into righteousness. We believe in an *eternal* difference between good and evil, between right and wrong. We believe that by no process whatever can the one grow or be developed out of the other, that the materials for the formation of good, whatever Mr. Emerson and the rest may say, are not at all to be found in evil. We believe that it is not, by any means a healthy or safe doctrine, but the very opposite—a right damnable doctrine, as we will persist in calling it, to tell any man that he is on the way to good, though, meanwhile, he be living in sin. Whatever means such Pantheistic doctors may take to guard their doctrine from abuse (and some of them are by no means very careful) the plain “practical application,” deducible, by no breach of logic that I am aware of, from such strange premises, will be no other than this: “you are to see life and enjoy it,—even in its less pure and virtuous forms, if you have a mind. Sow your wild oats or other strange seed by all means, and make a merry time of it for yourselves. Of course, for your own sakes, you will be well careful to keep clear of the police, for fear of disagreeable consequences. Otherwise you need observe no other restraint, you need give yourselves no other concern. The more evil you are doing, the more good you are making, and therefore you had better be diligent about it. The more sin you sow, the greater will be the harvest of right bye-and-bye. The more experiences of evil you obtain, the nobler will your lives be in the end. You lose nothing of your true manhood in that way; you gain a great deal to your right manhood. You don’t lose the good by being evil; you are surer of helping it that way. In fact, you eat your cake and keep it too, however unlikely that may seem, and whatever bigots may say about it “Evil is good in the making,” don’t you see? and if you are to make any good of your lives, you must do a deal of evil first; and you may just as well do it heartily as not.” I tell you there are a thousand words being spoken by any number of teachers in these days, that just mean that, if they mean anything. And there are some people who imagine that we are, in the exercise of Christian charity, to call that something else than a damnable doctrine, a soul-destroying lie, scorching and withering like the very Tophet flames!

But, without troubling ourselves further with such popular Emersonian aphorisms, which, so far as thinking is concerned, abound far more in powder than shot, in sound than in sense, let us rather turn to see what is the actual Pantheistic doctrine of sin, as set forth by the greatest man of that school in modern times. The German Hegel, before whose giant intellect such ‘Will o’ the wisp’ minds as that of Mr. Emerson are as a farthing candle to the sun, has given us if not a very intelligible (it is not the fault of German doctors to be too intelligible), at least a full enough, account of his notions on this subject. In him we have to do, not with one who will cheat us with sparkling epigrams, which may mean much or little, but with one who can reduce his thoughts to a philosophic system, fully matured and demanding our most careful consideration. Shall we venture for a few moments into that region—not the wholesomest in the world, I warn you—and see in

what form the apple of the knowledge of good and evil is presented to us by Professor Hegel? Sin, with him, as with all Pantheistic doctors, is not essentially immoral, sinful, but only another movement or partial development of good. It is the spur that stirs us up from the state of indifference in which we naturally are, and urges us forward on the path which leads to good. To start with, we are, according to the right conception of us, good—good however only in a natural sense. But this natural goodness is only in a state of neutrality in us. It has as yet met with no opposite, on which, as a foil to set it off, it can learn to manifest and develop itself. For it is only by opposition that it can get to any development. Just as the electric force could work no result unless there were at once the positive and the negative sorts of it in existence and operation, so the cold, dry, natural life that is in us must have these two opposing poles—of good on the one side, evil on the other side, to quicken and warm it into vigor and activity. The one of these cannot *be* without the other;—not the good without the evil, not the evil without the good. It is the law of the human spirit, the true, Divine order of things, with which there is not the slightest call made upon us to quarrel. The true substance of our humanity, which we grant to be good, has of necessity its darker shadow; it is not the least use in the world that we should try to jump over our shadow,—to get the good without the evil, the substance without the shade, the righteousness without its corresponding sin. “Man,” says Hegel, “is by nature good, good in himself (*gut an sich*). But the good that is in him must not just remain in that natural, quiescent state of *gut an sich*: it must expand and grow. It is the destiny of man that he must step out of this estate of mere natural goodness,—that he become through his own deed that which he is in the original conception of his nature. We cannot help ourselves: we must go into life, into the world, and by a long process of striving, of error, of sin, must make our way back to the good and true from which we started, to which we are destined to return. To remain as we are originally, to think that we can be good *immediately* without any such process is itself an evil,—a *one-sided* way of treating the life we have got. The prodigal, in fact, *must* get away out of the state of natural, indifferent goodness in which he is in his father’s house, must get out and see the world, to live among his riotous companions for a season and among his swine, eating the swine’s husks, for a while longer, before he can become what he is destined to be. It is a necessity of his nature: it would be wrong for him to fight against the necessity. There must, as Hegel calls it, be a separation, *diremption*, made, between man and himself. The original unity must be broken up. There will be then that in him which holds fast by his original goodness,—that in him too, which gropes out into the ambient darkness seeking to win new ground for itself there. That new ground cannot be conquered by our remaining in the simplicity of natural goodness (*gut an sich*): the thing can only be done by our marching forth out of our original goodness and becoming what we call sinful. The natural good we have in the beginning is only natural, and like all natural

things has a tendency to grow corrupt, evil, if we let it remain so: it must become, what Hegel calls a spiritual and not a mere natural goodness, and that it can only do by—a round of iniquity, in fact, by wading through all the mud and mire of sin. The firm, ultimate standing-ground is not otherwise to be reached by us. And so, at last, after having described a fair circle, this philosophy just brings us back to where we started, with nothing more added than that very questionable experience of evil through which we have passed. And all this is not a chance kind of procedure, that may take place or not take place in us, as circumstances or will may be. It is the law that regulates human nature, which cannot, we are told, get itself developed in any other way than that. There is no room for any free will of ours in the matter. There is a law impressed upon our beings that things must just proceed so and not otherwise in us. You may just as well make up your minds to the inevitable. It will not help you much to fight against the actual law of things. If you do, you will find the “law of things” too strong for you. But don’t fear. While sinning in the world, you are still on the way to righteousness. Things are bound to come all right by and bye. Of course you will have to strive and taste the keenness of life’s battle now and then, of a battle at one time, against a goodness that is content with itself and will not stir out to see the world and get its questionable experiences there, at another time against sin when it is apt just to become too sinful and to lead you into evil consequences. Try as you can to hold the balance even between the evil and the good, and things will come right. No fear of that. You cannot meanwhile get the good without the evil, not attain to righteousness without sin.

I can only hope, my friends, that I have made this statement of the Hegelian teaching on this matter plain to you. I have had to strip it bare (not without trouble,—that philosophy being rather unwilling to get out of its own peculiar garments), of all that learned phraseology in which its author shrouded it from the sight of the multitude. Freed thus from its esoteric subtleties, and reduced to its bare outline, it does not seem the most hopeful or the most successful of speculations. After all it explains nothing. It bids us believe that sin is part of the established order of things, but does not shew us how or why that can be. It outrages our moral sense and removes all proper distinction between good and evil, by telling us that good can only work itself out in the way of evil, and that evil has no tendency to produce evil, but ultimately only to produce good fruits. It sounds, when it gets its words translated into plain language, as if it were saying to us that evil is the true end of good, that good is also in great measure the end of evil. It is hard for us to believe aught like that:—hard to see why we had got a conscience at all, that witness of an Eternal rule of righteousness, from which all deviation is sin, if this is all the meaning of sin. We cannot, for our share, notwithstanding all the learning of Hegelian doctors, come to believe that tares are like to grow wheat, that a cluster of grapes will be found where the thistle down was wont to be, or that the devils have it as their object, always before them, to manufacture

righteous men and true. We have learnt to interpret things differently. We cannot but regard it as a very hopeless task therefore to construct any theory of the universe on the supposition that sin is a law, an order of our being, and that the proper operation of rightly ordered humanity is sinful. If it be a law of our nature that we sin, then sin is not wrong. We are not breaking a law when we sin, in that case, but keeping a law. And the more we sin, the more we are acting in accordance with the law that regulates our being, and the most astounding criminal is after all the most righteous man. It is only when we are fighting against sin, dreaming of escape from it, of getting the victory over it, that we are going wrong. We are then attempting to break through a law that does not admit of being broken. We are trying, as they call it, to leap over our own shadow, and the sooner we give over that foolish, hopeless business, the better it will be. We cannot accept any Pantheistic or other declaration that sin is law. We shall continue to believe, with the Bible, that sin is lawlessness. If we listen to the voice of our own consciences, we can believe nothing else than that. Could we possibly be right in supposing that the evil which has withered and marred all that was fairest and best in humanity, which is ever mining the best hopes, darkening the fairest prospects of humanity, which is trampling in the mire of impurity or under the heavy weight of oppression so many thousands of human souls, and turning all their glory into shame, whose wounds are ever green, whose sores are ever festering on the body of humanity, which must once have been so fair,—that that is the law which binds us, that our being is subject to that as to a terrible necessity, that there is no possibility of getting ourselves set free from that? Can we believe that the Great Power who brought us into the world has stamped that upon us as part of the necessary constitution of our nature, that He could not do any better for us than that? Or are we not to look upon it as from the beginning the foe of all righteousness, not a Divine order at all, but the most horrible transgression of all Divine order? Are we not to look upon evil, not as the means of our perfection, but as the one hindrance to all perfection, not as any part of what is essential to our humanity, but as a terrible accident rather, which by some means or other, has come to be what we now see it? For my own share I am sure it is the one thing I have got to fight against, and nothing will ever induce me to believe that I have the slightest right to have aught else to do with it.

It may be that thoughts like those which the Pantheist gives expression to, have found a place also in our hearts at different times, and we did not know well what to do with them, what light to get for ourselves upon them. Have we found any other such satisfactory guide for ourselves in such perplexities as that which is presented to us in the Bible? We had no rest in thinking of sin as an order to which we were subject. Our consciences told us that, so far as we accepted that as the law of our lives, we were making a confusion of our lives, that it would be the worse for us if we came to any understanding or treaty of peace with that. We saw, too, that there was an order of things fighting against *sin*, bringing

down what we call "judgments of God" upon it. We felt that we could not be working out the true ends of our being, if we gave sin any authority over us. And the Bible approves, endorses, that vehement protest of the conscience within us. It tells us that we are going utterly wrong if we suppose that there is any order in sin. Sin is not law, but transgression. There is no law that makes it imperative on us to sin. There is a law that very sternly forbids us to sin. Evil, therefore, is not a positive power, it is only a negative want of power in us: not a constituent part of our nature, but rather a defect: hardly even the presence of something that ought not to be there, so much as the absence of something that ought to be there. Sin is the want, the absence of law,—man trying the best he can to do without any higher law than his own ill-desires, and succeeding, of course, very badly in his attempt. 'We don't want to be guided: we can quite well guide ourselves. We have no purpose of allowing ourselves to be ruled: that is a business we can transact for ourselves!' It is this state of *anomia*, lawlessness which, as St. John declares, constitutes the true nature of sin. There are some of our deepest theological thinkers who, while they have denied to sin the authority of a law, have nevertheless, tried to resolve it, according to its essence, into some *positive* principle. Dr. Julius Müller, to whom we owe the fullest exposition of "the Doctrine of Sin," has tried to establish the opinion that sin is selfishness, love of self; and there are many divines in Germany and England who have adopted that as a right and satisfactory explanation of the sad phenomenon. Dr. Schenkel and others, again, would resolve it into worldliness, love of the world. I don't think that such attempts have been very successful. I think, on the whole, they are founded on a mistake. I regard them as, to a considerable extent, an abandonment of the only safe position from which to look at the nature of sin. The love of self or the love of the world are undoubtedly dangerous things enough; I am not sure that we can look upon them as *essentially* sinful. It is the excess rather than the bare presence of them that makes them so. We are to some extent surely bound to love ourselves: there may be even a love towards the world, akin to the love which God Himself has for the world, which is not evil. The selfish man no doubt is sinful, and so also is the worldly man, but neither selfishness nor worldliness fully expresses all that sin is. Sin, as I said, is not positive, but negative in its nature. It means no more than the absence of a Divine law to guide us, opposition to a Divine law, and consequently to the Divine Lawgiver. It is a *lawlessness*, and therefore also a *godlessness*. It says virtually: "we have a law but don't choose to keep it. We choose rather to do without it. We shall plunge off into life without any such rudder as that. Other creatures that have no freedom of will may have to follow the law which binds them: we are free and can regulate our actions for ourselves. We have got liberty of choice, and choose meanwhile—*not* to obey the law that has been given us." The nature of sin is properly expressed by disobedience, a self-chosen opposition to the will of God. Into whatever forms, of selfishness, worldliness, or whatever else, it may afterwards develope itself, that is what it originally is.

Ah, my friends! Is it not just this that our consciences are testifying to us day by day? Sin, so far as it is sin, is a lawless thing, a breach of the order appointed for our lives. So far as our lives are sinful, it is just because we have been trying to live without any law of God which we acknowledged to be higher than our own wills. As we look back on the road in life by which we have come, we may observe, not without sorrow, confusions enough that we have left behind us there, deeds of ours that we must painfully feel to have had sin at the bottom of them, deeds too that we may not just feel to have been sinful, but which had no meaning in them, nor principle of right guiding them, no actual Divine order according to which they were done, no law of God of which they were the exponents. They were not done in accordance with any godly rule to which we were willingly obedient. We did not realise the fact that we had any ruler over us: we were in so far "without God in the world." If the thought of His law came in upon us at all, we rather turned away from the thought of it. We were afraid it might not have much to say to us that would be pleasant. We chose to try the hazardous experiment of living without that, of judging for ourselves what might be right or what might not be so right, for us to do. The world had its code of precepts to which it was needful for us to conform, and that was about enough for us. Without much trouble it was possible to keep ourselves right in that quarter, and for the rest we did not need to care very much. The plan we were following was not very accurately calculated on the supposition of there being a God in Heaven who had made us for some special purpose, and that He had a law for us which we were to keep. As we think now of all the wreck and waste and disorder of our lives, is not this the secret of it all, that we have just refused to have any Divine Eternal Law to be our constant guide, that we have taken something else which was not Divine nor Eternal to do the guiding of us instead?

2. I can say no more to you now of the nature of sin as it now is in the world. There remains to us the further question, of which only a few words can be said at present, How has sin come here? As I said already, it did not begin with us or with our generation. We must trace it further back. It must have had its beginning some time, somewhere before us. As we go back up the ages and trace the stream of humanity through long historic epochs upwards to its source, we find evermore the same passions and the same guiltiness of men exhibiting themselves then, in the old and oldest time, as now in the new, in those dim and ever dimmer ages as in this present one. Sin has been handed down to us from them. That sad and fatal inheritance has been duly left us, has been received by us. But it must have commenced at some time. We cannot fancy that it has had an Eternal existence here. We cannot conceive man to have been sinful as he was made at the first. God cannot have made man evil. Such a blasphemy against the Creator cannot be allowed so long as there is any conscience left in us to protest against the foul imputation. Man was made upright, whatever number of false and dangerous and damnable inventions he may have found out since. We have a witness to that fact, not in the Bible alone, but within our own hearts. And yet the evil, the

sin, has got into the world somehow, and is not, by any natural process, to be got out of it again. One generation gets it from the foregoing, as that again from the one before. So that, apart from all church and Sunday dogmas about it, we have this terrible fact demanding some explanation from us, that sin is a transmitted, an inherited evil, that it has come down from the earliest men who dwelt on our globe, and has not been improving either in the course of transmission. There is no denying that. You may talk about and about it as long as you like, and dispute till you are hoarse regarding the terms you are to use about it, but the fact is so and not otherwise. Sin is not merely an actual thing, existing now; it is a thing that we bring with us from the former generation out of which we were born. Surely the Bible and theologians are not so wonderfully out in their declarations when they speak of an original sin which went before and was to some extent the cause of all actual transgression.

But, if we admit the fact of a transmission of sin, are we not virtually giving up the ground which we assumed in treating before of the *nature* of sin? We said then that sin was not a law, but a breach of law. But now are we not virtually saying that sin has come to us according to some natural law. Your doctrine of original sin means that we have received from those who went before an evil nature. We could not help that. It was no choice, no fault of ours. Perhaps, if we could have had any voice in the matter, we might have chosen to have it otherwise. After all, are you not making us the victims of a hard, unjust, cruel law, from which we cannot free ourselves? As humanity is transmitted from sire to son, sin is propagated with it. We are heirs to that evil and others connected with it, and are not even allowed to choose whether we shall serve ourselves heirs to the very questionable inheritance. It is one of the conditions of our being, and we must try to be content with it.—Well, you had better not be contented with it. I could only wish to hear you protesting a little more vehemently against it, to see you seeking more earnestly to get quit of that as one of the conditions of your being. For though we are forced to admit the reality of transmitted sin, *i. e.*, as I explained before, of transmitted impotence to do right, we are not to lay that as blame at God's doors, which ought to lie at far other doors than His. I am not here surely for the purpose of weakening the force of the words of our text in any single respect. I am not going to claim for original sin the authority of a law, when I have told you that all actual sin is lawlessness. Nothing of the sort. All sin must be put in that same "*lawless*" category. We will not admit original sin to be a law of humanity more than the other sort of it. It may be that we sinned with Adam as our Federal Head in that first iniquity of his, but we know that that act of his, in its federal, as well as in its personal aspect, was a lawless thing then, and it has not changed its character since that I know of. It may be that, as descended from him, we inherit a tendency to evil just as we do a tendency to disease and death: we are not forced for that to believe that sin or disease or death constitute any parts of God's true and Eternal order of things. For we are to remember that, whatever we may have got by our connexion with those who went before us,—by *nature* there is

that in us too which we have got by actual creation. There is that in us which was not only born, but which God made ; so far as it was God's making, it was wholly good and not evil. I am afraid that the orthodoxy of some Christians,—their zeal for some theological system that needs to be kept all square and compact, has made them sometimes forget that. They have allowed themselves to grow blind to the fact that God had something to do with the bringing of us into the world, further than just by a general arrangement of providential law to that end. Our humanity, —they have thought and taught, is wholly evil and corrupt, altogether fallen in Adam's fall, degraded and lost. What, my friends ! Are we to believe that there is nothing better about us than that, that there is nothing Eternal in us which could not have been propagated in the same way as these poor, dying bodies of ours ? Are we to believe that the spirits within us which testify of an Eternal Law given us by an Eternal God, came to us only from our parents, and existed in some undeveloped fashion in them before we got them ? I can believe nothing of the sort. We have that in us, I am sure, which came only by a distinct act of creation, whose presence in us can be explained by no theory of *traducianism*, or of prior existence, or in any other way but this. And without any controversy that which He created was wholly good and noble and like Himself. So far we do not differ even now from our first parents in their original state. What then, is the true state of the case as regards this question of original sin ? It is, I fancy, no other than this. We have a sin, a moral defect, by reason of our union to our Federal head, the Adam who fell, just because we have a *nature*, something the result of birth, which we have got from him. We have that in us which, in *its* original character, is not sinful, because its origin is God Himself, because it was made by Him. These two, the inherited, sinful flesh and the created spirit are striving in us all, in you and me and all men for the mastery, fighting a hard fight for victory. Which of these two, think you, expresses most truly to us the law of our humanity ? Which that gives us the true light as to the order which ought to guide and control our lives ? Certainly it is not the sinful flesh, but the spirit, conscience or by whatever other name you call it. It is this, that is ever protesting, at once against the inherited corruption and against the actual transgression as a breach of God's order, that shows us what we ought to be. We know its testimony is true. Sin may come to us by inheritance, by imputation, by temptation or in any other way you like ; but it meets with that in us which rises in vehement opposition to it, from whatever quarter it comes, which declares that sin has no right to rule us, that we are breaking God's appointed law of humanity if we give it, in however small a way, for however short a time, the management of us. Even original sin is not, therefore, in any proper sense, a law of our being ; but the reverse of that, the true law of our being is ever directly opposed to that.

I have no intention at present to say much more of the origin of evil, nor to enter upon any of those metaphysical questions that have been raised about it. The Bible tells us of a great power of evil who tempted our first parents,—the same Evil power who is now at work among our-

selves. So far as I know, no modern thinker or school of thought can throw any light on the subject. That it was the Devil to whom we owe the introduction of sin into the world, and in great measure the continuance of it in the world, is the clear teaching of Scripture, and all the philosophies in the world are not likely to give us any more satisfactory explanation. But at present I cannot enter upon the consideration of such matters. I had to speak to-night of sin in its relation to law, sin as a breach of law. Our first parents, standing there just inside the threshold of the world in their God-created, God-like innocence, had freedom of choice, of will, bestowed upon them:—they might remain as they were, or they might disobey the law given to them, and forfeit that high estate. They chose that latter course. With no necessity of nature compelling them, they sinned, they fell. And we too, though fallen with them, have still freedom of choice left to us. We may do good or do evil: we may follow the Divine law or break it: we may obey God or choose some other Master. We are called on to make our choice. Every day of our lives we are making it in one way or other. The Creator has not forced us to be evil: He is not compelling us to be sinful. He is ever seeking to bring us up out of all evil. The mischief is,—not that there is no good thing in us, but that there is evil as well, evil that has a tendency to increase and spread till it has outgrown and overpowered all that is better,—all that is of God, in us; evil that we cannot ourselves eradicate or expel, which nevertheless needs to be eradicated and expelled, if ever we are to become all that we ought to be. We cannot help ourselves against it: it remains in us, scorning our feeble efforts to put it down, bringing forth and shedding in our lives its bitter fruits, shewing itself by far too powerful for us. We cannot overcome it: it is ever overcoming us. Well: God can help us and does. He has brought deliverance for us in an altogether unspeakable way. He has said: "Save from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." He has sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, and so has condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.—AMEN.

LECTURE XII.

SIN AND ATONEMENT: SOTERIOLOGY.

JOHN I., 29 :—"Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world."

II. COR. V. 21 :—"He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

CHRISTIANITY and Modern thought, however much this last may have been wandering away from the former in certain particulars, both agree that there is something wrong with this world as it is at present, that the true, rightful order of things is not just getting itself observed with perfect precision, that something is needed to put what is wrong right, to bring order out of all the confusion. Christianity has its own plan for rectifying what is wrong, and stands there since eighteen hundred years to tell us how atonement, reconciliation, salvation is possible. Modern thinkers, so far as they have not just turned away their heads and passed by on the other side while our poor, wounded, bleeding humanity lay in the mire with the life slowly oozing out of it, have also been furnishing us with their panaceas—the best they could afford, for all human ills, their schemes for putting all human things right. Whether any one has been much the better for all their philosophic or unphilosophic schemes,—whether any poor soul has found comfort or peace, or any sore heart has got healing, or any weary son of Adam has obtained rest from them ; whether any one, hardly bestead in the fierce, fell fight of life, has discovered the way to victory, or spirits sorrowing over lowly graves have found any balm for their grief and pain, from what modern speculation has been teaching:—these are questions, I suppose, which we must not ask here for fear of being set down as unscientific or I know not what. Plain men and women *will* ask such questions, but philosophy, from her serene altitudes, frowns all such anxious enquiries back. 'Such things don't concern us here ; whether hearts are glad or whether they are sore,—whether they are filled with grief and pain or with the opposite, are enquiries that we can't allow to trouble us.'—Well : let it pass. We for our share would rather have something that did trouble itself a little about such matters, that could shew us that these things are not without a meaning, and still more that they are not without a remedy. At all events let us know what you can tell of that truth which, as you say, you have been seeking and toil-

ing after. Let us know the best and highest that you can declare to us. We are much in the dark, and the darkness is growing very painful to us. Can't you give us ever so little light?—Earnest souls, I believe are crying out in these days alike to Christianity and to philosophy for some sort of riddance of all their difficulties,—earnest souls whom it is not easy to satisfy, whose doubts and difficulties it is not so easy to remove. The consciousness that all is not right with them and the world, oppresses them, fills them with alarm. They would like to have some light upon all the confusion and darkness and perplexities manifold that are about them: they want to have some hint of a deliverance from all these. And there are no doubt multitudes of strange new doctors, each with his system of healing and amelioration for humanity, with his own plan for putting the crazy joints of this old world-machine to rights again. On this dull night air of time, amid the groans and sighs of a diseased humanity, and the shriek of the oppressed crying up to the Lord of Sabbath, there rises also the hum of discordant voices each proclaiming its patent panacea, and the confused din grows greater as our century rolls on, and philosophies, each infallible, if you take its own word for it, shout distractedly in the ears of any humble seeker of truth till he is ready to grow distracted too, or is fain to shut his ears and let the mad world wag on as it may. Plenty of systems for putting the world straight; only when we are in perplexity, and good counsel is dear and not to be bought in any market by us, we find that they are none of them of much use to us. They at the best throw a bundle of philosophic terms at us, and think that we are to appease our thirst and hunger with them. They can't find their hands when they are wanted, nor help us to find ours. And meanwhile Christianity has been standing in the world all those centuries,—a great temple of God with its doors ever open for the sorrowful and the sick of heart, sanctifying sorrow, healing sin. Amid all the poor Job's-comfort which rival schools, with their doctrines and their dreams, can yield us, may it not yet be worth while that we should stand in these old ways and see what light and guidance may be left for us there? We are not at least to be put off in this quarter with theories and speculations, the fancies of idealizing brains. There are facts at the foundation of this teaching. Whether they are such as that we can get out of them all the good they promise, it is for us to enquire.

There is, as we saw in last lecture, a vast amount of sin in the world. We saw further that sin is a transgression of the true order of things here. What then are we to believe as to the way in which the Infinite Ruler of the world looks upon sin? Is He so careless about His own order that He is not affected in one way or another about any breach of it? Is it no matter at all to Him whether His law be maintained or no? Is He in a state of perfect indifference as to whether His creatures live in righteousness or in sin? Has He just the same feeling, or want of feeling, whether we be doing His will or the opposite of that? Has He no feeling of wrath, indignation against iniquity or wrong? There are some who tell us that it is a very degrading view of Deity to suppose

that there can be anything akin to anger in the heart of the Almighty at all. 'Surely we cannot suppose that He is of like passions with us. Were it not something more befitting the Moloch-worshippers of old time than Christian men of this nineteenth century to fancy a God living in a state of chronic rage because things are not quite according to His mind here in this lower world? We are to think of Him surely, only as a Being of Infinite mercy, and as therefore having no feeling of indignation even against wrong.' Now, if you think it a mark of the Perfect Being to be wholly without any feeling of indignation against wrong, so do not I. If we ourselves feel angry at any unrighteousness, I believe it is God who has taught us to be so. When we see iniquity, malice, oppression and fraud doing their accursed work, we do well to be angry. When we are conscious within ourselves of a vehement protest against some triumphant evil, and will not accept that as right, however mighty it be, and almost wish for ourselves an opportunity to bring vengeance on the ungodliness, we are sure that this feeling is not all wrong, that it is one of the noblest things about us. We wish for ourselves the power of putting the wrong thing down, of exalting the right in its room. We believe that God has given it to us to feel so. It would be no pleasure to us to be told that He Himself can have no feelings akin to ours. We don't want a God who will just put sin and righteousness on the same level, and trouble Himself the least in the world about either. We want one who will not countenance any wrong, who will not be in any state of indifference as to injustice, who will *resent* unrighteousness as a breach of His Eternal order of things. A God,—speaking with all reverence,—who cannot be angry with sin and wickedness may do very well for the Nirvâna of Buddhism or for the Paradise of Epicurus, but is not of the sort best fitted for the reverence of men and women who have to fight against one or another unrighteousness and work of the devil. The God who gets and keeps the supreme place in our hearts must be One, not careless or indifferent about right and wrong, who hates evil so heartily that He will help *us* also to fight against it, and seek to deliver us from it. If God, as we are sure He must be, is a lover of righteousness, He must of necessity also hate and be angry with all sin.

But then that evil with which God can have no fellowship, for which He can have nothing but hatred, *opposition*, wrath, is an evil that also cleaves to us. We too are, as our consciences bear witness, sinful and guilty. We have done evil, and God is angry with all evil. It is not pleasant to think of either of these two facts: it is very terrible to have to think of them together. The consciousness of these two things being true has been the one great source of trouble and unrest to men of all countries and times, the thing more than all others, grievous and burdensome to them. This consciousness has driven heathen men, in their distraction, to acts of sacrifice that we can regard only with horror. The worshippers of Moloch or of Shiva have entertained the most terrible notions of what God was, and have done their worship in a way that freezes the blood in us as we think of it. Many of the heathenisms of

the world have had deities that would not be appeased without the shedding of human blood. But at the foundation of all such heart-sickening errors, did there not lie at least one solemn truth? 'God is not as we are. He is not sinful as we are, but righteous, hating sin. He can have no fellowship with, no favour at all for, our unrighteousness. He can only be wroth with sin.' And then there arose in them that thought which was the truly horrible one about them, that God's anger might be bought off, that they only needed to pay a proper price, and then they would have God's favour again. The Divine favour was in the market, and they thought themselves quite able to make the purchase. Of course the price of such an article could not be small. But there was nothing, however dear it might be to them, that they were not willing to give for it. "Wherewith—they asked in their extremity, shall we come before the Lord, or bow ourselves down before the Most High God? Shall we come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Nay, oh horrible! Shall we give our first born for our transgression, the fruit of our body for the sin of our soul?" And some of them actually went and presented even that awful sacrifice, and thought that the Almighty would be all the better pleased with them when He saw their hands smoking with the blood of their tender babes, of their sons or daughters. They could not trust the Lord's goodness, nor believe that He who was angry with the sin had still pity for the sinner. They would not wait and pray that He might put them right Himself; by such terrible ways they felt it lying on them to attempt putting themselves right. These have been the mad, diseased doings of men whose consciences had made them dreadfully afraid. But was the witness of the conscience itself untrue for all that? Had it spoken lies to them? Were they, even by its light, walking in a lie? Were they wrong in supposing that God could not look with any favor upon wickedness? That He could look only with indignation upon that? They were certainly utterly in the wrong in supposing that God could take His forgiveness to such a market as theirs and let it go to the highest bidder there. They were most of all wrong when they fancied that one unrighteousness,—merely because they had invested it with a religious character and made it part of their dark and damnable worship, could wash white some other unrighteousness of theirs which did not happen to have any religious character at all. But they were right enough in believing that the great God with whom they had to do—was not One who could have any communion with sin, that He was angry with sin, that they needed to be delivered from that if they were ever again to enjoy His favour.

But even with them there may, amid all their darkness and error, have been the feeling, that if they were wrong and guilty, as they felt themselves to be, it was not they, notwithstanding all expiatory sacrifices, that could put themselves right. Must they not have felt that, as a mere bargain, they had no right to expect that God would give them what they needed for all that they could possibly give Him? God alone

could put them right, and could they imagine that He was only asking a price for the doing of that? Reconciliation could not begin with them; it must be from Him that that work should begin. And did not their sacrifices themselves, with all that was dark and ungodly about them, rest upon the supposition that God was Himself seeking after reconciliation? Even they in their heathen darkness may have had the dim consciousness that atonement must begin with God, nay, that it had already begun. If they had not felt, to start with, that God was merciful, they could surely never have imagined that aught they could offer Him would make Him so. That surely, at least, is the way in which we are driven to feel. When the conscience of guilt, shortcoming and ill-desert rises upon us, and troubles us sorely, we cannot but ask,—‘How is all this wrong to be set right, how is all cause of offence to be removed? What can we do,—what can we offer, that may be accepted as satisfaction for ‘the sin of our soul?’ Ah no! It is impossible. It is not for us to settle that debt, to clear off that hopeless score. If there is to be any reconciliation, it must come from Him against whom we have sinned.’ And then there dawns on us the other and blissfuller assurance, the feeling that brought comfort and strength to the man of Uz in the time of his pain and sickness of heart so long ago, that God Himself is, in righteousness, seeking after such a reconciliation, that all His anger against sin, His judgments of sin are not for the bare purpose of executing vengeance on the transgressor, that they are there for the purpose of putting us right, that He is angry at sin because it has been putting us so miserably wrong, that He has no anger against us except in so far as evil is in us. His wrath is only for the purpose of establishing righteousness again between Him and us for the purpose of burning up and destroying all that would hinder that. Though He is wroth against our sin, we are persuaded that He is loving us notwithstanding—loving us so as to seek to deliver us from the sin that is ruining us.

At the same time, until we know *all* that He has done for us, the thing cannot but remain dark and mysterious to us. To know that God is angry—angry in righteousness—and that it is something about us, something that cleaves to us, that we cannot get quit of, that is the object of His indignation, cannot but be appalling to us. For that wrath of an Almighty, an Infinitely Just God cannot be as human wrath, a burst of hasty passion blazing up in hot and vehement fury, but the abiding feeling of an Eternal Mind; not swayed by any temporary emotion, nor suddenly betrayed into some expression or explosion of itself that will soon burn itself out and sink as it rose. With Him it must be infinitely different from that. With Him that wrath which is “revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” must be the expression of a permanent principle,—a principle that is to burn up and consume all sin out of the world, to fight against it till it is overcome, till there is no more standing room left for it in the world. It is a righteous thing and must accomplish itself in righteousness. Not a thing that will pass easily away, nor to be bribed to abolish itself for any show of submission. And where is that indig-

nation to fall except on the heads of the guilty? How can we, who feel ourselves guilty, hope to escape? And yet we are sure that that same God is dealing with us in love and gentleness, seeking to do us good when we ourselves are most evil. How are this Divine Love and this Divine Wrath, with each of which we have so much to do—How are these to be reconciled? That is the great problem which the conscience within us offers for our consideration. If there is to be any way for such a reconciliation, it is not to be one of our invention. God Himself can alone accomplish that. What is His plan for doing so, and how are we to discover, to know His plan? Well: He has not kept it hid from us, nor left us in darkness as to how He can be angry against all sin, and yet have compassion on the sinful. He has told us—what we ourselves could not otherwise have known, how He may be just and yet justify the ungodly. He has shown us how he saves the sinner, just because He is angry with the sin. For in the gospel of His Son, of Him whose is the only name given under Heaven or among men whereby we must be saved, He has taught us where and how salvation is to be found by us who are sinful. That gospel tells us that that Divine Wrath which was, in righteousness, revealed from Heaven against the sins of men, has, in righteousness also, been removed through One who has been made Sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Our Surety has taken our sins upon Himself, and made an end of them and of the wrath revealed against them. This gospel tells us of atonement, reconciliation, through the cross of Him who died on Calvary. Whether you have accepted the declaration of the gospel as God's own truth or no, here at least is one plan presented to your consideration for reconciling what to the natural conscience must seem hopelessly irreconcilable.

On the old Hebrew altars, ever so long ago, according to God's own appointment, sacrificial fires were kept burning,—fires typical of more than the Hebrew mind itself could well comprehend. When sin was lying on the congregation or on any individual member of the congregation, it was through those atoning fires that a way could be made back again to peace and forgiveness. When the flesh of the slain sacrifice, of the victim that was made to represent sin, was laid upon the altar, and consumed in the sight of the people, and the ministering priest spake the words of absolution, that was a testimony to those ancient worshippers that there was a God among them whose office it was to forgive and also to destroy all sin,—to make an end of the sin in order that the sinner might go free. The poor, unoffending victim was not just the price that the man had to pay for the sin of his soul. When that short-sighted people began the least to suppose that, and to act on that supposition, they were very solemnly warned that they had better give up the whole business of sacrifice, that sacrifice was not at all acceptable to God on any such supposition as that. And have we got so blind in these days that we can no longer understand the lessons thus shadowed forth in those old times to those old worshippers? There is a God who has been and who is seeking to clear the world of sin, just

in order that a ransomed world might be reconciled to Himself. That is what we are to believe about Him who has revealed Himself as the Father in Heaven. In anger, in righteous indignation He is consuming, making an end of the world's sin, in order that the world may have the way clear for it to reconciliation, atonement,—to becoming a very kingdom of Heaven. It is essential for us to learn *that* as God's true position towards the world, to learn that that is the order of His kingdom so far as sin is concerned. We are not just to think of Him as punishing here and pardoning there as He may have a mind, without having any law or order in His operations, without having any wide, universal purpose to serve. If such were the case, we should be left in our distress and perplexity without any certainty that we were right or that we could be put right. But if it be true that forgiveness, atonement is not an anomaly, but the true order of God's kingdom, not contrary to His law of working, but the rule of that, a rule which we can escape from only by our disobedience, rebelliousness, unrighteousness;—if, when we come to Him for forgiveness, there is every reason for us to believe that our forgiveness is the very thing He has been seeking after, even when we ourselves were careless and indifferent about it, then surely we learn to have confidence in Him, as knowing that He will not reject us when we come to Him.

I have not, hitherto, been saying very much about the way of atonement set forth in the Gospel of Christ. I have been speaking to you of what makes such an atonement necessary. And if you have been carefully going along with me thus far, you will now be prepared to see how the marvellous truths declared to us in the Cross of Jesus Christ fall in with the wants and longings of the human conscience, how we learn there all, in reference to a deliverance from sin, that we need to know. God, we are taught in these Scriptures, sent His Son into the world to take our humanity, with its sorrows and with its sins, upon Himself, to stand as representative of a humanity that was guilty and fallen, that through Him was to be restored to God's favor and forgiven. He took the sins of men upon Himself, that in His person, in His suffering and death, sin might be judged and destroyed. The Son of God came down to us in the lowest depths of our poverty and guiltiness, did not refuse to become one with us even though we were guilty and poor, and bore our sins, and made atonement for them, seeing we could make no atonement for them. He became sin for us that we might be justified, might be put right, might become the very righteousness of God in Him. He carried our sin in His own body on the tree,—our sin in all its character and consequences of which we ourselves know so little, of which He has such fearful knowledge. He bore it, that hateful, painful, damnable thing, that thing of condemnation and punishment which even we, to some extent, know it to be. And, of course, in bearing sin, he also bore the punishment of sin,—not the mere name of it, but the unspeakable reality. Sin is a thing for which there is and can be nothing but punishment, so long as it is a righteous God that is ruling the world. What the exact nature or extent of the

punishment of sin is, we may have but a very feeble idea: but we are sure that, whatever it is, He took it on Himself. He bore that:—came down to us even in that, and did not put from Him the cup of judgment He had got to drink, nor turn away from those pains of death and hell which sin,—our sin brought upon Him. This is our comfort. We cannot sink so low in our misery and woe, in our terror and pain at the presence of sin, but He has been in some far lower deep than ours. We can cry up in the anguish of our soul out of no abyss which has not also felt His presence, and become, in spite of all its grief and tears, a very door of hope in consequence. We can walk in no darkness or shadow of death, but He has been there before us. When spiritual troubles perplex and grieve us, and deeps of despair seem yawning beneath us: when we, too, feel the terrors of death, the pains of hell getting hold of us, we are sure that He knows about it all. In our darkest, loneliest places, His footsteps are still traceable, and from beyond them He is speaking words of encouragement and confirmation to us. When we cry to Him for sympathy, when no other can do us any good, we know that we have a Merciful and Faithful High Priest who feels for us in our needs and pains, who has been in all points tempted as we are, though without sin in Himself, and who is, therefore, ready and able to feel for and to help all those who are tempted still.

To the doctrine of a Christ bearing sin for us, taking it on Himself as His own, and dying as a punishment for it, there is no end of objectors and objections in these days;—such a storm of objections and strife of tongues about it, that it is with not a little difficulty that we can get all the good it is meant to do us. Not infidelity alone, but a number of rather questionable theologies, out at elbows a little, and trying to mend themselves with patches from the new web of modern reason, are denouncing such a doctrine with all bitterness. We are representing God, it is said, as very unreasonably angry, determined to wreak His vengeance somewhere, if not on the guilty themselves, then as the next best on the head of the innocent, careless of everything but the satiating of His sovereign rage; determined to have all that out in one way or another, to have the last penny of His debt paid, no matter who pays it,—the last rigorous demand of His vengeance satisfied, no matter by whom:—it is so, we are told, that we are conceiving of our God. It is just the damnable old doctrine of Moloch over again: this Christianity is, after all, only another form of worship of the Destroyer. Those who are using such hard words about us—those of them, at least who belong to Christian churches, might at least, shew a little charity in their judgments, and give themselves, at the same time, a little trouble to find out what we mean, without just going and taking the Devil's office on them, and bringing accusations that are untrue. If we do speak of *satisfaction* in reference to the Lord's work, of a Divine Justice that needed to be satisfied, let it be remembered, at least, that God *is* Just, and that not even Infinite Mercy can help Him to do an unrighteous thing, that, in fact, whether we regard the death of Christ in that light or no, there is a Divine Justice that must satisfy itself in some way

and that so far as we have been able to see, it has never been satisfied in any other way so as in the death of Christ. If we do worship God as a Destroyer, and we very certainly do, it is only as the Destroyer of sin and unrighteousness. We do not think of Him as hard or cruel, as an austere Master, as a heartless Tyrant, because we represent Him as in all things doing right,—executing right judgment. We think of Him as righteous and as putting right, by means that were not pleasing to Himself what had gone wrong, destroying what had no business to be, removing through the Cross what could not have been otherwise taken away. The picture of the Son putting Himself as a shield between us and the Father's anger may have been painted sometimes in a very unrighteous way by so-called evangelical doctors: I feel very sure it has. But all sober-minded men will look upon such representations as rather horrible caricatures. The Father was not just seeking to get at us in His wrath when the Son interfered in our favor. The anger of God was all against sin. If the Son learnt to know what that anger was, it must have been only because He was made sin for us, that sin in Him might be condemned. So far as we are concerned, it is Infinite Love, on the part of both Father and Son, that is exhibited to us in the Cross of Christ.

We can hardly conceive that the wrong of the world could be righted, that the sin of men could be destroyed save by some One capable of doing so, taking their sin with all that sin means and causes, upon Himself. There is, however, a species of theology going now, preached with great earnestness by such men as Mr. Maurice and others in England, and by a multitude of deep-thinking divines in Germany, that recognises nothing, properly speaking, *vicarious* in the Death of Christ at all. 'Christ did not bear any punishment, was not at all dealt with as being guilty. His one purpose in coming here was to tell us that the Father in Heaven was seeking after us, was ready, without any satisfaction, freely to forgive us, and, at the same time, by a surrender of His will to that of His Father, to be an example to us in doing the same.' They are ever telling us that Christ did not pay a price for us, that He came only to proclaim a perfectly free grace to us. That He did and is doing that last, I hope nobody is denying. But whether it was not necessary, in order to do that, ere God and the world could be made right with each other, that He should actually bear the world's sin in His own body, is, of course, quite a different question. Without this imputation of sin to the Saviour, theology, it seems to me, must become, as indeed it appears to be in the writings of such men as I have referred to, little better than an enormous game of *hide and seek*. We have got separated from God somehow in this great darkness of time and the world, and unfortunately, we, on our side, are either very careless or very ignorant of any way of finding Him again. He, however, is seeking after us, trying, not with very great success, apparently, to find us out. And when all other means have been tried and failed, and men have not let themselves be found out to any extent by other means, then, as His crowning effort, God sends His Son in the likeness

of sinful flesh that in this guise He may be better able to follow us into all our hiding-places and find us out in spite of all our efforts at concealment. After much trying to discover what this vague but vehement theology really means, this, in addition to the Saviour's *exemplary* sacrifice of *will*, seems to me about the net-result of all it has to say of the Saviour's work. If you think this better than the usual representation of Christ suffering in our stead, you are at liberty, of course, in this free country, to make your choice;—only I cannot but feel, after thinking a good while about it now, that this *hide and seek* theology is not quite sea-worthy or the best in which to meet all the storms that are beginning to blow on us in these days. A God who must sacrifice His Son, or, which is the same thing, ask His Son to sacrifice Himself, not because a righteous law demanded it, but because He was at a loss in His search after naughty and rebellious children, and in order that the Eternal Son might find out for Himself and tell us what self-sacrifice was like, is not such a transcendent or marvellous substitute for Him who laid our sins upon His Son, because the world could not be right unless sin was consumed and destroyed in it, who sent His Son to consummate the great world-sacrifice, in which it was to be shown that sin could not pass with impunity here, but that God could save the sinner nevertheless, that He could be just and yet justify the ungodly. I think there are questions which the conscience is solemnly asking us every day about sin in its relation to God, to the world, to a Saviour, which that school of theology has not solved nor is likely to do, which it prefers, as the cheapest plan, wholly to overlook.

The Son of God, in becoming man, in eternally uniting humanity with Godhead, had to deliver us from all that makes us unfit for the favor of God, had not merely to tell us that God was willing to forgive us, had not only to deliver us from the sense of sin which, considering how very easily we can often do that for ourselves, it was not at all necessary for Him to do, but to free us from sin itself with all that sin, in time or in Eternity, can possibly mean for us. No mere sacrifice of will, on the Saviour's part or on ours can take sin away. Nay, mere forgiveness by itself is not able to put a wrong thing right. We know that it will not restore life or property if either has been taken away. It will not destroy the evil effects of a lie, of drunkenness, of impurity. Are we not often enough told by a certain class of modern thinkers who have not found out yet what the thing means, that forgiveness of sin is a thing altogether impossible? Everything, they remind us here again, goes in the world by fixed, unalterable laws. A sin once done remains, —has become, in fact, one of the forces that are making or modifying the world, and cannot be blotted out for ever. If a man has ruined his constitution by strong drink or by an unchaste life, he cannot save himself, and no power, in the world or out of it, can save him from his sin and its fruits. He suffers in His own flesh: his children also must also suffer in consequence of their father's guilt, and inherit feeble constitutions, ill-fitted for all the storms and roughnesses of life. If a man has cheated his neighbor, so much of the confidence that binds

men together has been destroyed and is never to be restored again. With every sin that a man may do, it is the same. The thing is done, and can never be undone. Forgiveness, therefore, is but an empty name,—a *vox et præterea nihil*, a mere delusion of diseased human brain, of unwholesome fancies seeking rest for themselves in an altogether unallowable fashion. If, as the Pantheist tells us, God and the world were one, this surely would be the only right interpretation of the business. But as we believe in a God above the world, against whom we have sinned, in whose sight we are guilty, and who is ruling us in love as well as in righteousness, we can still look for forgiveness from Him. Such a forgiveness as shall acknowledge and maintain the claims of Eternal Justice, while at the same time it puts the wrong in us right, and declares the removal, the destruction of the evil. If there be a law or laws in the physical or in the moral world that give all its strength to sin, you will not break the power of the law by a mere declaration, from whatever quarter it may come, that sin is forgiven. Your forgiveness in that case would be a breach of law, itself a sin. If, when a man is found guilty of any crime, the judge should refuse to pass sentence on the criminal, he should himself be a transgressor of the law he administers. If there is a Divine law under which we now live, no Divine mercy can set that law aside. We have seen how it stands fast and *will* not be broken in reference to the physical consequences of sin. Are we to imagine that it can be more easily set aside as regards its moral significance and power? We on our side have broken a Divine law: God, on His side, cannot break it too in order to please or to save us:—cannot heal our unrighteousness [by any homœopathic plan of doing an unrighteousness as well. It would be a comfortable thing, no doubt, for ourselves to know that our sins, on any terms or on no terms at all, are forgiven by One who has the power to forgive; but if that forgiveness has left us otherwise just where we were, and put nothing right that was wrong, and made no reconciliation between our sinful lives and the law that was broken and is not repaired yet, so far as we can see, it can hardly satisfy the requirements of the conscience that is in us.

There are, of course, questions connected with the subject now before us of a more purely theological sort, questions regarding "extent of atonement" and so on, which it is no part of my present plan or purpose to take up. They lie meanwhile beyond the range of our enquiries. The one great fact we have now to do with is just this, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has put Himself in our place, taken the place in very deed with all its debts and liabilities, its sins and penalties, and that, by taking away sin in His own person, He has made our present place a different thing, one of righteousness and of reconciliation with God. To say, as the objectors are ever saying, that it is wrong for the innocent to be made to suffer for the guilty, "the just for the unjust," is a simple pre-judging of the case without knowing what the case is, just the pre-posterous plan which is so common in such quarters, of putting the hinder end first and then complaining of the wrong construction of the

machine. We must remember in what sense Christ is our Surety and our Saviour, Himself personally innocent and yet suffering for the guilty. It is by becoming one *with* us, not merely one *of* us, that He has put Himself in our room. He has taken up our humanity, just as it is, without any reservation at all, into union with His Godhead. The union between Christ and those whom He represents is that of strictest unity such as no human relation can very adequately represent—a union intimate as that of head and members in the body, as that of root and branches in the tree. It means a *communion* of life, of righteousness; His life living in us, His righteousness justifying us, making us right. It is thus, as the establishment or re-establishment of a union that is Eternal between God and man that we are to regard the work, the sacrifice of Immanuel. That is the one central idea that is to guide our thoughts about all He did and suffered here. Christ one with us, and so suffering for us is the object which the Gospel presents to our view. Even here in human society we see human lives so bound up with each other that the one can't do wrong or suffer without involving also the other. According to the present constitution of things, the innocent has again and again to suffer for the guilty. One who is surety for another must bear the loss if the other for whom he has bound himself should prove either unfortunate or a rogue. If one member of a family prove a reprobate and fall into crime and do deeds of villany or shame, it is those who are connected with him, the parents who are responsible to the world for the scapegrace's presence in it, or his brothers and sisters who may themselves be living in all manly or maidenly virtue, who have to bear the most of the shame of his fall. Or, to take that other relation which, more than any other, expresses to us the nature of the union that binds the Saviour and the Church together, if a husband has lost all that he possessed, if he, by drunkenness or other self-indulgence, has reduced himself to beggary, he does not suffer alone. The blow of his poverty and shame does not fall only, does not fall chiefly on himself. He may have got so hardened himself as to feel very little shame, and not even very much misery at all. But she who has united her life to his, for better, for worse, who has committed herself to his very questionable keeping, and who may faithfully and honestly have been doing a wife's part by him,—she has to suffer far more than he. The innocent suffering for the guilty! That, surely, is the commonest sight. Children suffering for their parents, or parents for their children, brother for brother, friend for friend. The unrighteousness does not lie in that. When lives are united together, it is surely a right thing that the connexion should be preserved. The wrong lies only in the guilt of the offending party which makes the suffering of the other necessary. It is wrong that a husband should be a drunkard, a brute. It is not wrong in the wife to suffer with him, if thereby she can do him good. It is a gross unrighteousness for parents, through their own folly or sin, to transmit a diseased constitution to their children: there is no injustice in the law of things that makes the child suffer for the wrong that has been done. Well: Christ has become one with us,—the very Son of

Man, heir to man's evil, chargeable even with man's sin. He has made Himself, from His very position, responsible for us; must answer for what we are and what we have done. If we have broken the law, He must make it all up with the law. The evil that should have fallen on us falls on Him. So far as there was a question between us and God about an order that had been broken, a law that had been transgressed, He had to solve that question in His own person. The law was weak through the flesh, and could not make separation between the sinner and the sin; it could only bring condemnation upon the head of the sinner, and cause him for ever to reap as he had sown. But God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, has condemned sin in that flesh of His Son, has judged it, has driven it out of the world and destroyed it. And now, when we accept forgiveness at a Heavenly Father's hand, we have no room left for the painful, distressing feeling that after all the question of guilt remains for us just as it was, that the wrong has not been put right but only overlooked, that God has no more than just shut His eyes to it, and has not dealt with it in judgment at all. We know that the thing is abolished, that we have done with it now and for ever, that the Just God has put that and all else about us right, justified us in very truth, and that we need not trouble ourselves any more, that we need evermore only to trust Him.

Christ has become sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. That was the object He had in view, the purpose for which He had come into the world, the end towards which He was going forward when He was in the world, the thought of which upheld Him in all His loneliness, in all the pain and woe of that unspeakable self-sacrifice. That prospect was shining upon Him through all the gloom of Gethsemane, amid all the anguish of the cross. Above all the storm and tempest, with the billows of God sweeping over Him, with all the powers of darkness arrayed in such fierce fight against Him, He could look forward to that as His haven, His goal. It was no pleasant work He had to do; not a cup of gladness that He had to drink; no path of roses on which He had to go. Could He have failed—He with all the hopes of a world depending on Him, carrying away the sin of a world, that He might bring back righteousness for it, humanity must have been abandoned as an utter wreck. No righteousness of God would have been possible in it more. But now we have become the righteousness of God in Him. His work has been accomplished. His sacrifice has been offered in the world, and the world in consequence is to have sin and sinners banished out of it and become a right, a Divine world, a very kingdom of Heaven. He has seen of the travail of His soul in it, and—He is satisfied.

Satisfied! Well: and are not we satisfied too? or, have we still got our doubts about that work of the Saviour? Have we found no light, shining down through all the centuries upon us from that cross on Calvary, whereby we may walk safe amid all perplexities here? Is that offence of the cross, of which St. Paul spoke in his day, still existing among us? Have we, may be, been listening to other teachers,

wandering amid the rather unproductive fields of modern speculation, too ready to hear any objections against the Christian faith, and hardly even giving it the fair treatment of enquiring for ourselves and at first-hand, what it has really got to say to us? And what have all those other teachers been able to give us instead? What confidence or comfort have they yielded us? Have they been able to put us right when conscience told us we were wrong? Are they not trying rather for the most part, to make us feel quite contented with the wrong, telling us to put up with it as inevitable, a thing from which we cannot and don't need to escape? Are they giving us any new sense of righteousness that we had not before? Are they helping the least to make any reconciliation between us and the God in Heaven whom we have offended? Some of them have been furnishing us with a number of clever objections against Christianity, teaching us to look upon that as an antiquated old-wife's fable, utterly unfit to rule the lives, to guide the conduct, of strong men or of fair women any more. That they are very good at that miserable, negative work of trying to rob other people of their faith, and of asserting for themselves at the same time quite a monopoly of infallible teaching, I, who have been doomed to listen to them rather more than enough, know perfectly well. But they can't even make an offer of what Christianity gives. They deal with the conscience and its witness for righteousness, just the least they possibly can. We feel, when we look into our own hearts, that we are not all we ought to be, that there are evils in us we cannot cure, wrongs done against our life and its Author which we cannot rectify, contradictions between the conscience and the conduct which can't be reconciled, guilt that we ourselves cannot remove. And in greatest measure, our modern philosophies only tell us that our desire for righteousness is a vain thing, and by way of satisfying our thirst, our hunger after that, they inform us, in the utmost variety of learned, philosophic dialects, that it is all a delusion and a mistake, that we are only trying to jump over our own shadow, and are not likely to succeed in our attempt. 'The vainest, foolishlest thing possible for you is this craving after some supernatural righteousness, this desire to become something better than yourselves!' Ah God! Is it so? Are all these painful longings and distresses of the spirit within us that visit us just at our best moments, this anxious looking out for deliverance from all that is evil and wrong, this supreme desire of the heart just to be right, right with God and our own conscience, *only* right whether we are to be rich or poor, whether we are to be honoured or despised here,—are these but foolish fancies, an unwholesome appetite for what is wholly unnatural and unattainable? We cannot the least believe it. We would believe anything sooner than that. It is this that commends the gospel of Christ to us, that it just appeals to such earnest longings of the spirit, that it meets and satisfies them. It offers us justification—the making of us right. It recognises the evil that is in us. It does not bid us think less of that: it teaches us to think more. It does not outrage the testimony of the conscience by telling us we are right when we know ourselves

wrong. It does not tell us there is no guilt in our sin. It assures us very solemnly that there is. But it teaches us also the way of deliverance from guilt. It comes to make us become righteous—the very righteousness of God in Christ. That is what we become through faith in a Saviour. God's own righteousness,—the crowning, the supreme manifestation of that. The cross of Christ has set us right and is slowly setting the whole world right in spite of all resistance. We, as redeemed by Christ, are becoming through grace, the very expression of the Justice of an Almighty God; and are unseparable from that for evermore. Ah, brethren, how else am I to conclude this discourse than in those words spoken of old by the Jordan: Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. There lies our hope. Whatever the trouble that may vex us, there is, believe me, comfort for us there. There is light for our darkness, rest for our weariness, in Him, just because in Him there is forgiveness for all our sin. "He taketh away the sin of the world." Whatever your doubts or difficulties may have been, suppose for a moment this were true, that whatever questions you might start, whatever objections you might raise, this were the actual fact. What a different thing the world with all its sin would become to you! "The sin of the world" is surely the one thing that troubles us in one form or another above all else here: what if it were indeed taken away? At least, amid all the madness and the guilt and the folly, the confusion and unrest of a world that still cleaves so terribly to its sin is it not worth while to enquire whether there is not One whose work it is to take sin and all its train of evils out of the world, One who began that work amid the poverty and sorrow of His life on earth, and who will never leave His work undone,—who, as part of His wider plan, is saying also to you and me: 'Come, ye weary, and I will give you rest: Come, ye guilty, and I will grant you pardon: Come, ye who are oppressed by all life's ills, and I will give you Life Eternal.'

And now, friends, my work in connexion with these lectures is ended. Undertaken, not without anxiety, and continued with the chilling sense of weakness and imperfection in the doing of it, the task is now at last done. I have sought to do it in all honesty and good conscience, as not quite without experience of the perils that beset the path, of the perplexities that vex the soul, of the enquirer after truth in these days. If what has been delivered in these discourses has not been all that it should have been, and no one can know so well, so painfully as I do that it has not, I still trust that this poor effort of mine may not have been utterly in vain. If there was any one of you who needed something else in connexion with the subjects that have been spoken about that I have not been able to give you, some guidance out of a perplexity which I have not afforded you, some solution of troublesome doubts which has been sought for here in vain,—if I have not spoken the things that should have been said, or if what has been spoken has been so bungling and imperfect as to have done you little good, you are still not to allow my defects to interfere with your very earnest consideration

of the things that have been spoken about. Do n't be offended at the way, because the guide has not been all that he should have been. The truth, remember, is none the less truth, however clumsily it may be uttered. And for the rest I have only to commend you to the guidance of Him who teaches so much better than man can teach, of Him who is the light of the world, of whom I am here to bear witness. * * My public ministry for the year also ends now. Amid whatever defects, I have been trying, as I could, and as I knew it, to speak God's truth among you. Have we been coming to know that truth any better—you and I, during those twelve months that lie now in the irrecoverable past? Have we been growing in the grace of God? Has our coming here from one Sunday to another, wrought any manner of deliverance for or in us? Is our faith clearer or more earnest? Are we doing God's will better? Have we been getting strength to toil or to suffer, to do battle with the ills and temptations of time and with that "sin of the world" from which Christ died to set us free? Ah well! The past is gone and does not return. There remains what of life the Heavenly Father may still give us here, to be spent in His service, in the faith of His Son. Be it ours to redeem the time, seeing the days are evil. AMEN.

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